THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE




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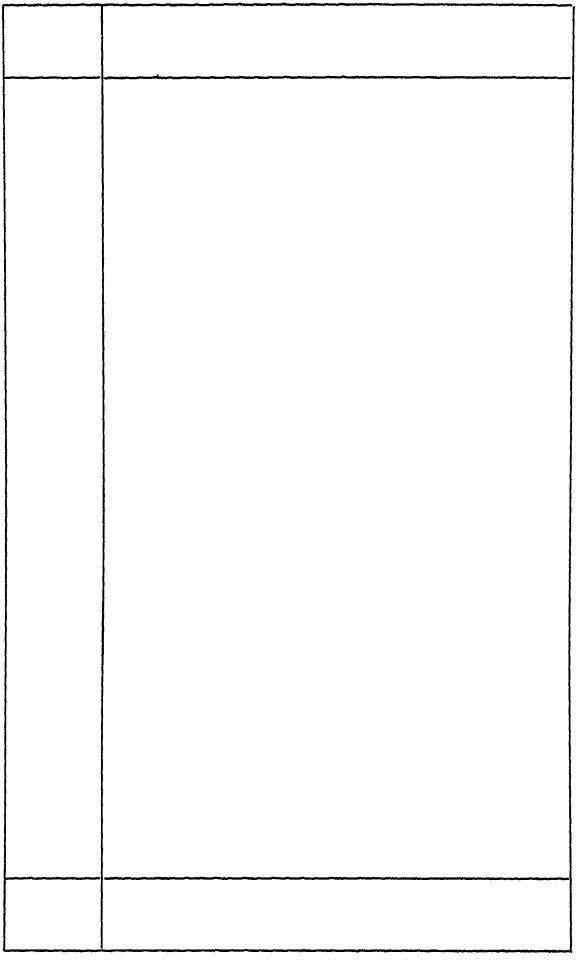
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THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE





STUDY FOR HEAD OF NIKE-EIRENE
BY AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE

BY

ADELINE ADAMS

WRITTEN FOR
THE NATIONAL SCULPTURE
SOCIETY



NEW YORK
MCMXXIII

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PREFACE

ANY survey of the Spirit of American Sculpture must naturally take into account the Body of American Sculptors. On the other hand, the outline here offered does not attempt the preposterous task of putting everyone in his place, and thereby producing an unmannerly and unreliable Who's Who in Sculpture. Many sculptors whose work is dear to me are scarcely named in the following pages. Why? Because, very frequently, the individual achievement has been too fine to be slurred over and shunted off with the faint praise of mere listing, while at the same time it cannot well be appreciated at deserved length, given the limitations laid upon the present writer, —limitations temporal, spatial, person-

al. Again, it often happens in art, as in nature and in politics, that certain forces for good are better left unmentioned; headlines would disturb their harmonious functioning.

The brief annals of our sculpture may be divided either according to our wars, or according to our times of peace. The critic who chooses the former way will point out that our Revolution called into being a national consciousness which was strengthened by the War of 1812, and which immediately thereafter sought expression in Federal or State buildings, and in their adornment by the arts. Side by side with national yearnings for art sprang up half-thwarted individual longings either to produce art, or to enjoy art, or to possess art. Not until the close of the Civil War, with its legacy of greater national unity and advancing prosperity, did we find out that our education in art was too meagre to let

us express in any fitting way the emotions aroused by that conflict and its costly sacrifices. In the marketplace, we were naïve and unformed enough to accept with more or less satisfaction and in infinite repetition the stone soldier of commercial origin. In the home, we thoroughly enjoyed the anecdotes, patriotic or parochial, told by our Rogers groups. But before the Spanish War was over, our enlightment as to the artistic value of these productions was rather general. With respect to the Rogers groups, we passed to the other extreme; in our headlong attempt to register culture, we forgot that these works had performed a genuine service. Later, the wave of romantic rococo noted in the "red-blooded" literature of the day had its parallel in some of our noisier war monuments, creatures surging from a limbo that was neither art nor commerce. Since the World War,

and even before the World War, there has been, through our museums and other sources, an honest effort toward coöperation between art and manufacture. An up-hill task but a necessary one, in any sound national development! The day of the stone soldier is over, but whether we are laying up for ourselves a store of future regret in other forms of memorial sculpture remains to be seen.

Thus to mark off by our wars the various chapters of our sculptural history and to develop each chapter in sequence would be in the grand style; perhaps in a grander style than is suited to the dimensions of this sketch. It has therefore seemed better to indicate certain natural divisions of the subject by means of those enterprises of peace, our expositions. The Centennial of 1876, by its cruel comparisons, stirred our sculpture from the lethargy supposed to have overtaken

it in the studios of American expatriates in Rome and in Florence. Until 1876, we had been dreaming, stumbling, aspiring; making false moves in plastic art. A few early triumphs shine forth from the prevailing mediocrity; but it must be owned that Cooper, Hawthorne, and Emerson, in the world of letters, have no vigorous contemporaries in the world of sculpture. During the 'eighties, however, a group of really strong and characteristic pieces of American sculpture emerges by slow degrees. Ward had already produced his noble equestrian statue of Thomas. He now placed his bronze Washington in front of the Sub-Treasury in New York, and his Pilgrim in Central Park. In 1881, Saint-Gaudens put out his incomparable Farragut; his Puritan appeared two years after Ward's Pilgrim. Daniel Chester French, with notable work behind him, came into his own

with the exquisite group of Gallaudet and the little deaf-mute; in the early 'nineties he showed his Milmore Memorial, (the Angel of Death and the Sculptor) a work of extraordinary appeal to both artists and laymen.

While these men were creating sculpture to be proud of, younger men were conning with all their might the vigorous lessons proffered in the French schools, or on French soil, by Falguière, Mercié, Dubois, Chapu, Saint-Marceaux, Rodin,—a mighty host. At the Columbian Exposition, our country had abundant good work to show in sculpture from the hands of returning youth. Between 1876 and 1893 were packed most of the essential lessons our sculpture has learned, either at home or abroad. No subsequent exposition has disclosed so great an advance as that noted in 1893. There has indeed been a further development of basic principles, as well

as a recent genial stylistic efflorescence in manner, favored by many of our younger sculptors under the influence of sincere post-graduate study of archaic models. And there have naturally been occasional obscure ultra-modernistic experiments not without service in the zigzag of progress; such works are neither to be despised nor unduly exalted because they proclaim themselves revolutionary. An advance as rapid as that made in sculpture during the seventeen years between the Centennial and the Columbian is not to be expected in the near future. Such an advance could occur only as a strong reaction from a feebleness not now evident, or from a retrogression not now casting its shadow. Many thoughtful painters have pointed out that sculpture by its very essence is far less subject than painting to the more unfortunate inroads of ultra-modernism.

We sometimes worry ourselves unnecessarily because our arts and letters are not what is called "distinctively American." But being distinctively American is not in itself a merit. The distinctively American voice, for example, has not yet been hailed as the international model. Give our sculpture time for still further expression, and it will become as distinctively American as need be. A just and happy exchange of culture between peoples should not be stigmatized as mere imitation. Oddly enough, the first timid flowering of our American painting and sculpture took place among the Quaker Philadelphians and even among the Puritan Bostonians. It did not follow the footsteps of the earlier settlers of French or Spanish blood. Culture has its curves and curious weavings forward and back. Already in our ideals of art education a change has been noted. Many who

have studied this subject for a lifetime now believe, as they could not with wisdom have believed a generation ago, that it is better for the student to get his technical training in the schools of his own country, and to learn the beauty of foreign art and the value of foreign culture through eager vacation study abroad, rather than through prolonged residence abroad. The vacation schools of music and painting at Fontainebleau are watched with deep interest. Thus far, their results speak well for this new point of view in art study.

The occasion for which this modest book was made is the opening of the National Sculpture Society's exhibition in the year 1923, under the auspices and in the neighborhood of a distinguished group of learned societies. Such an occasion invites rejoicing, rather than lamentation. Hence in these loosely gathered chap-

ters little is said of commercialism, of mechanistic tendencies, of unhappy professional rivalries, of mistaken ultra-modernism, or of other burdens or bugaboos that hamper the spirit of American sculpture. I have tried to bear in mind a saying of Kenyon Cox, an accomplished critic, yet honest at all times beyond conventional expectation. Mr. Cox was asked whether in his opinion as a critic, a certain article on a well-known painter, a younger contemporary, was not too favorable in its judgments. Taking time to consider, Mr. Cox answered, "No, to my mind, that critique is not too favorable! It brings forward much of the best that is to be found in one of our best painters, and it doesn't harp on his defects. As I take it, the thing was written for intelligent readers. They are able to read between the lines. From what is said of the qualities, they will know the defects."

NOTE

IN the preparation of the present work, the author has found herself, through the natural insistence of her own and her husband's feelings, placed in a somewhat delicate position. It remains, therefore, for those editing the volume to preface it with some expression of admiration, however inadequate.

To sculptors, it is needless to point out the importance of the work of Herbert Adams. It is therefore to the lay reader that some word must be said of the man who hesitates to have recorded the admirable production of a fruitful and influential career. The wisdom, restraint, and true sense of the just and fitting, which for years have rendered all relation with his

calm and balanced intellect the delight of friends and the aid of fellow workers, are mirrored in an art which so easily reflects these qualities. To those connected with the preparation of this exhibition it is a great pleasure to render serious tribute to the man who among sculptors has brought such faithful homage to the Art of Sculpture, and whose influence must be cherished as one of the permanent forces for Truth in the Art of our land.

THE COMMITTEE.

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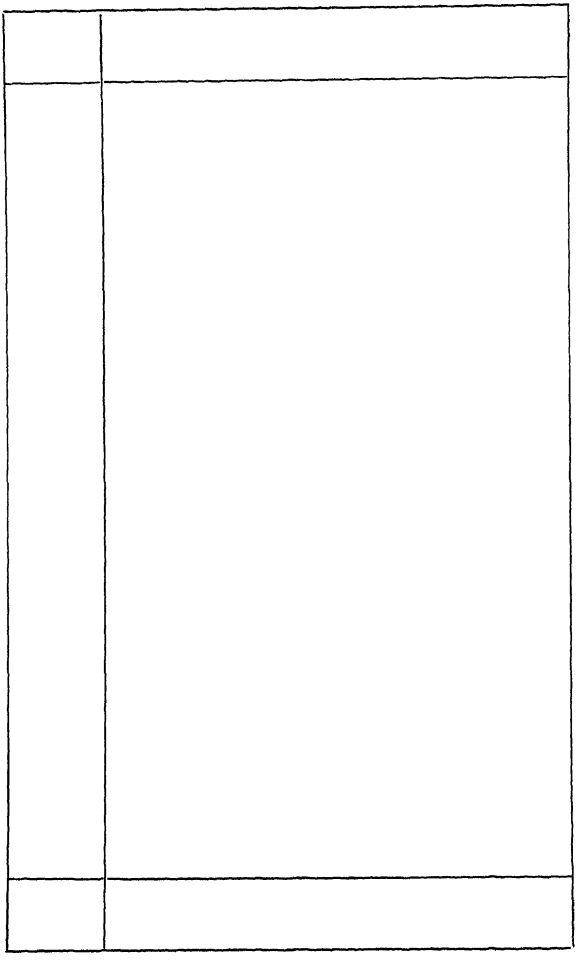
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I

THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE



THE SPIRIT OF AMERICAN SCULPTURE

CHAPTER I

MRS. PATIENCE WRIGHT SPEAKS THE PROLOGUE

I

WHAT a pity that Thackeray, surveying our pre-Revolutionary American world in the interest of his Esmond and his Virginians, had not chanced to espy the valiant figure of our first American sculptor, Mrs. Patience Lovell Wright of New Jersey,—Quaker, wax-image-maker, traveler, keen Republican observer of the moods of British royalty and the movements of British troops! Had his mind's eye but once seen her in her eagerly-

frequented rooms on Pall Mall, with the notables of the town literally under her thumb, in wax, and over her shoulder, in the flesh, we might have had from his pen a portrait worthy to live beside that of Beatrix, or of Madam Esmond, or of the Fotheringay herself. Similarly, if Lytton Strachey, building his Books and Characters, had followed out a line or two of Horace Walpole's concerning the "artistess," he might have given us a Mrs. Wright fully as engaging as his Madame du Deffand, perhaps almost as "inexplicable, grand, preposterous" as his Lady Hester. Such joys were not to be ours. Some of the traits that Thackeray and Strachey might have dwelt on for our delight have been well sketched by Abigail Adams, incorruptible eye-witness and letter-writer.

Mrs. Adams, though taken aback by the "hearty buss" with which the sculptress greeted ladies and gentle-

men alike, observed that "there was an old clergyman sitting reading a paper in the middle of the room, and though I went prepared to see strong representations of real life, I was effectually deceived in this figure for ten minutes, and was finally told that it was only wax." And Elkanah Watson, meeting Mrs. Wright in Paris, where she was living in her dual capacity as artist and patriot, notes that "the wild flights of her powerful mind stamped originality on all her acts and language." He tells us that the British king and queen often visited her in her London rooms, where they would induce her to work on her heads regardless of their presence, and where, at times, as if forgetting mundane deferences in the swirl of her inspiration, she would address them offhand as George and Charlotte.

The intrepid if somewhat incongruous figure of this Quaker artist abroad

will serve very well as herald or prologue to the drama of American sculpture. Nor can I think that either Mr. Greenough or Mr. Powers, Mr. Ward or Mr. Saint-Gaudens, Mr. French or the very youngest sculptor newly laureled by our American Academy in Rome would object to that assignment of rôle. Surely in any play, it is allowed that the herald may seem somewhat more fantastic and legendary than the kings and counselors that come after. Mrs. Wright and her waxworks are important to us, but not because anyone now accounts her the "Promethean modeller" her enthusiastic contemporaries charged her with being. She is important because her vogue reveals the artless taste of her time, its awe in the presence of perfect imitations of nature. Not that such awe is unknown to-day in the world of art. Indeed, our herald brings vigorously upon the scene one of the

major problems that still perplex the American sculptor in his work. I mean the problem of likenesses, those "strong representations of real life," as Abigail Adams would say.

II

A strong representation of real life was exactly what Thomas Jefferson wanted for the State Capitol of Virginia when he induced the great French sculptor Houdon to "leave the statues of Kings unfinished," and to cross the Atlantic to take casts, measurements, and artistic cognizance of the person of George Washington, in order to create that marble portrait statue still holding its own in the good top light of the Rotunda at Richmond. To cross the Atlantic, what an adventure for a home-keeping Frenchman in the eighteenth century! Yet in the year 1785, there must have been uneasiness

at home as well as abroad for Monsieur Houdon, so soon to become *le citoyen* Houdon. In the midst of our early Republican simplicities, there had been talk of an equestrian statue also. Justified in the hope of obtaining the commission equestrian as well as the commission pedestrian, Houdon accordingly spends a fortnight at Mount Vernon, taking casts, and "forming the General's bust in plaister." Later, however, the project of the equestrian statue is dropped, to Houdon's natural regret.

"We shall regulate the article of expense as œconomically as we can with justice to the wishes of the world," writes Jefferson to Governor Harrison, concerning the standing statue. "We are agreed in one circumstance, that the size shall be precisely that of life." Jefferson gives patriotic reasons for that decision as to size; he adds with excellent artistic judgment,



STATUE OF WASHINGTON
BY JEAN ANTOINE HOUDON

"We are sensible that the eye alone considered will not be quite as well satisfied." A generation later, writing from Monticello in regard to the statue of Washington that the legislature of North Carolina desires to order, he declares that this work should be somewhat larger than life. A strict realism no longer delights him. With true Jeffersonian divination of popular currents, he leans now toward the pseudo-classic ideal already dominant in European studios. As to the costume chosen, he finds that "every person of taste in Europe would be for the Roman. . . Our boots and regimentals have a very puny effect." In short, "Old Canove of Rome" is the artist North Carolina should employ. It is pleasant to note that just as Houdon, having "solemnly and feelingly protested against the inadequacy of the price, evidently undertook the work from motives of repu-

tation alone," so too Canova is "animated with ardent zeal to prove himself worthy of so great a subject." Thus happily are begun those steadfastly continued artistic relations between the United States and the two European countries in which art prospers as the light and livelihood of the people.

Washington himself, when the Houdon portrait statue is projected, plays an admirably discreet part in the art criticism of the moment. He writes to Jefferson, on August 1, 1786:

"In answer to your obliging enquiries respecting the dress, attitude, etc., which I would wish to have given to the statue in question, I have only to observe that, not having sufficient knowledge in the art of sculpture to oppose my judgment to the taste of Connoisseurs, I do not desire to dictate in the matter."

How unlike the home life of William

Hohenzollern! And how often the thoughtful sculptor of to-day has wished that Washington's simple dignity in admitting an insufficiency of "knowledge in the art of sculpture" might be pondered and taken to heart by those of us who are not qualified "to dictate in the matter"! In this our free country of the self-elected critic, the temple of art is at all hours invaded by those who cheerily announce that "they do not know much," but who nevertheless follow the example of William II rather than of our first President.

All the Jefferson correspondence respecting these two statues of Washington is of vital interest to the student of our art history. Our young Republic, in its early strivings toward art, was fortunate in having an adviser as well-advised as the master of Monticello. It was Thomas Jefferson who guided inquiring state legislatures,

now toward Houdon, the powerful French realist, and again toward Canova, the distinguished Italian idealist. Through Jefferson's hands, our American sculpture first received those rich streams of influence, realism and idealism, both so necessary in any living national art. For realism and idealism, however often misnamed or overpraised or discredited, each after the other, will continue to shape the artist's interpretation of his vision of life. Today, when in our literature books as fundamentally unlike as Maria Chapdelaine and Babbitt run their race side by side as popular favorites, we cannot doubt the hold of either classicism or naturalism on our lives and times. Gilbert Murray, in his notes on the Hippolytus, writes that its matchless closing scene "proves the ultimate falseness of the distinction between classical and romantic. The highest poetry has the beauty of both."

I MRS. PATIENCE WRIGHT

III

Returning to the Quaker lady who speaks our prologue, and conning once more the tale of her works in all their brisk naïveté, the sympathetic student will easily evoke the difficult conditions under which sculpture first reared its head in our country. Sculpture, though an art manifestly answering one of the earliest religious needs of primitive man, (and indeed the very first of all the arts to fall under the ban of the censor) is an art much hindered and abridged during large pioneer movements. Thus the Mayflower, that greatly accommodating vessel, may have brought over Elder Brewster's chest or some fair Priscilla's spinning-wheel, but we may be sure that never a statue came out of her hold. Neither architecture nor painting suffered quite as much as sculpture in that historic sea-change of the

early seventeenth century. As the turtle carries his house on his back, so the architect, in a sense, may carry his home in his pocket. The drawings and inherited traditions of cabinet-makers, carpenters, and architects supplied our colonists with excellent models for furniture, for mansions, for churches, for state-houses. Such models were not slavishly followed. They were adapted, often with great originality and skill, sometimes with creative genius.

The colonists' sense of form gratified itself in these directions, since the time was not ripe for sculpture. Diligent in fostering both foreign importations and local industry, the more prosperous of our forefathers had good houses, good furniture, good silver, good clothes, and even good paintings long before they had any good sculpture. Statues, unlike chocolate-pots and meeting-houses, cannot, even

when all materials are given, be magically called into existence from a sheaf of plans and specifications placed in the hands of competent artisans. A considerable body of sculpture in permanent form implies a background of orderly civilization, well developed on its industrial side. The marble quarry and the bronze foundry do not spring up over-night in mushroom growth. They are the foster-children of slow time. We are called an inventive, craftsmanlike people, but it was not until the year 1847 that the first casting of a bronze statue was accomplished in our country. The statue was of the Boston astronomer, Dr. Bowditch, and by the English sculptor, Ball Hughes. The original bronze cast was not a wholly successful piece of work; it was long ago replaced by a bronze from a French foundry. But those familiar with the difficulties of the situation will recall Dr. Johnson's

observation about the dog walking on his hind legs. "It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all."

IV

However, we need not harp too long and too mournfully on the physical impediments in our sculptural start. Enormous as these were, they were less mighty than the spiritual obstacles set up by time and place. First of all, it is to be remembered that the European world of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was moving on in a mild, manifest, not necessarily permanent decline in creative power as shown through the graphic arts. The waves of that decline reached even our own stern coast. It is safe to say that had the American colonists' hour coincided with an hour of large renascence in art throughout

Europe, our forefathers, whether Cavalier or Roundhead, would earlier have found room for art as a need and a natural expression of the freer life they sought. As for the distinctively Puritan view, that view too often (though perhaps not as often as we now think) denied and persecuted beauty in the fierce Puritan concentration upon holiness. It is true that art, in its blither and more genial guise, slips away from the society of the sour-visaged. But it is also true that a great tragic expression in art sometimes bursts uncontrollably from peoples or persons with minds exacerbated by long fortitudes. We learn this from the Belgian sculptor Meunier brooding over his brothers of the Black Country, from the Serbian sculptor Mestrovic immortalizing in stone his country's stern legends, from the poet Dante treading his Inferno. But the Florentine and the Serbian and the

Belgian produced their art under their native skies. They were not torn up by the roots to live in a strange land.

Yes, the main impediment in early American art was spiritual rather than material. When we see to-day in some lonely, half-forgotten New England village a spacious, nobly-designed, admirably-built meeting-house, capping the very crest of a high rock-ribbed hill of exceeding difficulty, (the church at Acworth will serve as an example) we uncover our heads before the efforts of our fathers to erect a house of prayer. The spirit moved them. Nothing less would have sufficed in what they did and suffered. The obstacles in their path were many and great, but being material, were surmounted. In our early strivings toward sculpture, the obstacles were both spiritual and material, and generally speaking, the obstacles won the day. We had no noteworthy early na-

tive sculpture, largely because we lacked the passion to create it. That passion was not dead, but it lay dormant during the long wintry season that preceded the spring of our national consciousness.

In the mean time, men and women died, and had their humble carved slate headstones; ships put out to sea, glorying in their robust wooden figure-heads of American make. Benjamin West's legendary adventure with his cat's-fur brushes and his Amerind colors and his baby sister's likeness no doubt had its sculptural counterpart in the creative endeavor of many an unknown fire-side whittler. These obscure dramas of artistic effort counted; though meagre and lowly, they were not in vain; they made for craftsmanship, art's helper. Referring to more important matters, we do not forget William Rush's full-length statue of Washington, hewn from

wood, or his soldierly self-portrait, carved from a pine log; or the early efforts, in portraiture, of Dixey, in New Jersey, of Augur in Connecticut; of John Frazee, that young stonecutter to whom we owe the first marble portrait bust chiseled in the United States, as late as the year 1824. We remember also the Browere life-masks, created by a secret process, and useful still as historic data.

Interesting and emphatic as are the personalities of all these early workers, that of William Rush is by far the most significant. In literal truth, Patience Wright was merely our first *sculptress,* whose work must bear the implications of frailty lent by that name. But William Rush was our first *sculptor.* In his youth he was a soldier of the Revolution, and in later life he was long a member of the Council of Philadelphia; his career as artist and as citizen won respect for the early

art life of our country. Born in Philadelphia in 1756, he was twenty-nine when Houdon sojourned in that town. Having been apprenticed when very young, Rush was already well-known as a carver of ships' figure-heads, work in which he continued to be successful throughout his long and busy life. His theory and practice in wood-carving conformed to Michelangelo's Gothic creed, somewhat outworn among sculptors, but of late restored to respect. William Rush earnestly believed that the carver should see his vision in the block, and realize its image by hewing away the superfluous shell. He was modern enough at times to stand by while directing a workman to chop here and cut there and slice somewhere else, so that he himself could save his own energy for keeping his vision clear. Of his Spirit of the Schuylkill, originally in wood but since translated into bronze and still standing over its basin

in Fairmount Park, the chronicles of its day declared that "no greater piece of art was to be found in all the world." The present age will hardly consider this draped figure the equal, say, of the Maidens of the Erechtheum. Yet the work, with its companion pieces, the Schuylkill in Chains and the Schuylkill Released, has its own vigorous archaic classicism which modern students may well ponder. Rush was one of the planners and founders of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. After this was finally established in 1805, our first American art organization, he was one of its directors until his death. As a many-sided man of action and of counsel, of intelligence and of culture, he sums up the best to be found in the varied characters of our pioneer artists, personages worthy of our deepest respect.

We shall be too quick despairers if we brood over the fact that most of

their works show Yankee ingenuity rather than Promethean fire. The inventive spirit is part of our pioneer heritage; it reappears rather often in our art history. Robert Fulton, as Mr. Isham reminds us in his story of American painting, was a promising pupil in Benjamin West's London studio. "From there he went to Paris, where he remained seven years, painting easel pictures, and also the first panorama seen there, whose memory is still preserved in the name of the Passage des Panoramas." Morse is yet another classic example of American genius serving both art and science. One of the later pupils of West, he had not only painted vigorous and important pictures but had also played a striking part in the founding of our National Academy of Design before he finally "wreaked his genius" on his invention of the telegraph. Hiram Powers, sculptor of the Greek Slave,

in youth acquired merit from the clock-work devices by which he enhanced the moving charms of the wax figures he modeled for a museum in Cincinnati. Today, in our journalistic canvassings of popular opinion as to contemporary American greatness, we find that in the public mind, Edison's name leads all the rest. The prickly palm of greatness is awarded not to a teacher, to a publicist, to a writer, to a political leader, or to an artist in any guise whatever, but to an inventor. Inventive genius thus claims our highest admiration; inventive genius may indeed be our highest national characteristic. If so, it is worth while (and not in the least "devastating") to consider whether the same inventiveness that animates the early art-forms of William Rush's followers does not also contribute something to the very sophisticated creations of our gifted and fortunately well-trained

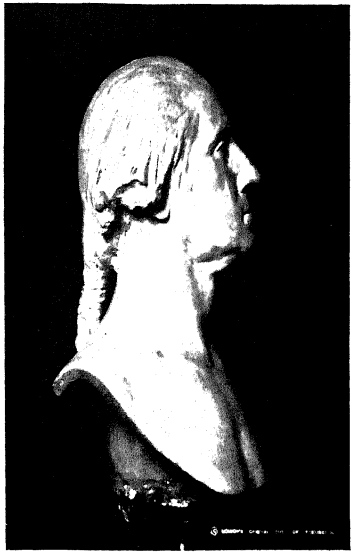
young sculptors with the *dernier cri* from Crete in their minds and at their finger-tips.

The story of American sculpture cannot be told under a parable of a chain with equally strong links throughout. One thinks rather of a slender thread, which may be fastened to a cord, which will draw up a strong rope, which will in turn attach itself to a powerful cable. If early Yankee ingenuity is that slender thread, let us thank God for it, and hope for better things.

V

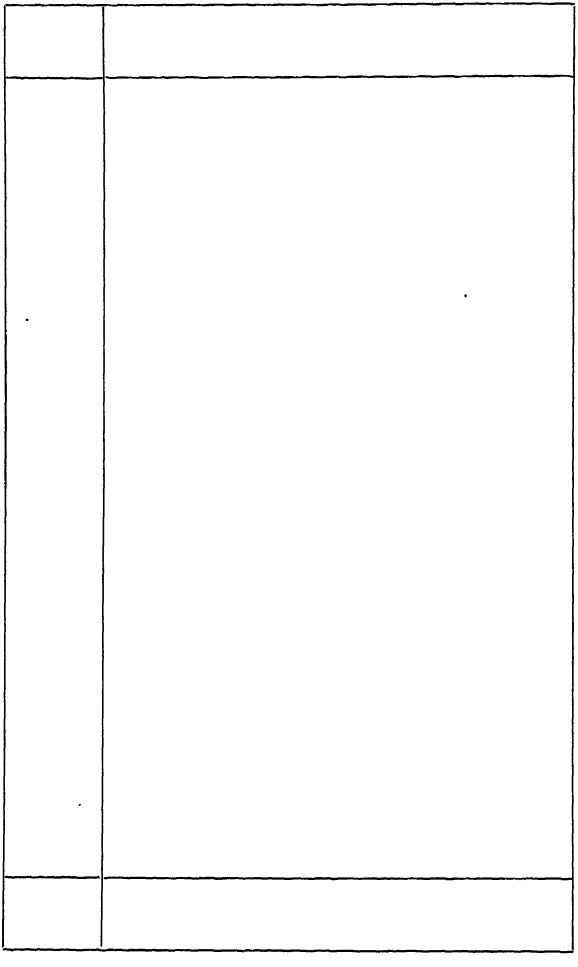
With the dawn of our national consciousness just after the dark hours of the Revolution, a natural human love for the likeness, strengthened by a generous surrender to hero-worship, is already arousing in us a longing for an art that will express our patriotic emotions. If achievement alone be

considered, there is surely a great gulf fixed between Patience Wright and Jean Antoine Houdon. But the same sincere passion fires Quakeress and *citoyen;* their common aim is a strong representation of real life, transfigured by the flame of the spirit burning in the lamp of clay. It is recorded that an overpowering sense of Washington's greatness sometimes actually impeded those artists who aspired to reveal him, body and soul, to posterity. Posterity then is fortunate because our fathers received from Houdon's genius not only the Washington statue, but also seven noble portrait busts, those of Franklin, Paul Jones, Washington, Lafayette, Jefferson, Fulton, and Joel Barlow, to mention them in the order of their creation, from 1778 to 1803. These virile interpretations of character were not lost in the ins and outs of our Atlantic coast-line. Even to this day,



BUST OF WASHINGTON, AT MOUNT VERNON
BY JEAN ANTOINE HOUDON

some one or other of them often reappears in public view, to excite interest, admiration, and controversy. But in the early nineteenth century, as is shown by Jefferson's counsel to the North Carolina legislature, Canova, rather than Houdon, has become the name to conjure with. Even in portraiture, realism has given way to pseudo-classicism, long before Greenough arrives on the stage with his Washington as the Olympian Zeus, a colossal half-draped marble figure designed for a shrine within the Capitol.



CHAPTER II

OUR BLITHE BEGINNING DAYS

I

ALIVE and kicking; better than we now realize, the old phrase fits our young American art of the early nineteenth century. In Boston, Mr. Bulfinch is packing his triangles and T-squares for a journey to Washington, where he is to remain twelve years as Latrobe's successor as architect of the Capitol. In New York, morning-star young art-students are passionately performing their historic ritual of fighting the janitor and founding new movements; even Colonel Trumbull is defied; hence, in 1825, our National Academy of Design. In Philadelphia, harmony presides over the Pennsyl-

vania Academy of Fine Arts. But in Washington, what commotion! Restorations are to be made after the fires of the British; there are new excavations, new aspirations. There's sculptor's work here for many a year. Bronze doors must be created, in the supposed manner of Ghiberti; pediments must be populated; and what is a dome without its colossal figure of Freedom? Greenough and Crawford and Randolph Rogers are the sculptors of the hour. And always Hiram Powers, somewhat apart from the Washington bustle.

Modern imagination fails to see those early craftsmen as they really were. Because they are dead to us now, we fall into the error of thinking that they always were dead, anyway; the stilly sort of sculpture they often made sustains us in that illusion. But when we look into their lives, and hear their sayings, we learn, almost

with a shock, that these men felt deeply, even while they expressed themselves feebly in their art.

Living amidst heaped riches of opportunity, the art-student of to-day can scarcely imagine the bleak poverty of artistic resource that Greenough and Crawford and Powers left behind them when they sailed away to Rome or to Florence. Nowadays, art-schools flourish here: casts of good sculpture abound; photographs of masterpieces may be had at a small price. Museums freely show examples of the arts of all nations, and intelligently arrange these displays to serve the immediate needs of students; in short, they do a great work so well that they have already become a target for so-called criticism from self-styled intellectuals exposing their wits in the columns of would-be radical journals. Things were very different in Greenough's time. There were indeed a few col-

lections of casts, probably with soiled noses; there were portfolios of steel engravings, that sometimes bore false witness against beauty.

Knowing the leanness of those early years, we can but wonder at the large vision of our fathers in considering our capital city; and we can but thank our lucky Stars and Stripes for the bond of sympathy between our young Republic and France, a sympathy partly responsible for the happy choice of General Washington's aid, Major Pierre L'Enfant, as our first city planner. The spirit of L'Enfant's work has survived the shocks of time and senates; that plan of the year 1792 (since extended in accordance with the principles of design it embodied) is still regarded as "at once the finest and most comprehensive plan ever devised for a capital city." Those lean years were not by any means the day of small things; it is to this hour a

blessing for sculpture and for architecture that Washington and Jefferson and L'Enfant laid large foundations for the seat of Government. A century ago, the continued building and re-building of the Capitol expressed a profound national feeling; the souls of our sculptors, as far as we had sculptors, were thrilled with desire to add plastic beauty to its gates and gables. At least one of those great dreams was destined to end as food for journalistic jibes. Greenough's colossal marble Washington as the Olympian Zeus, a grandiose conception pored over for seven years in Italy, proved to be too large and heavy for the indoor placing intended for it, and it was doomed to be set up outside the Capitol for the public to sharpen its wits upon. Unfavorably shown, it is unjustly viewed. One recalls with pleasure Saint-Gaudens's gentle judgments of our pioneer sculptors and

their handiwork. "Those men were greater than we know," he would say. He refused to join in any of our modern merriment at the expense of the Olympian Zeus. *Esprit de corps* compelled him to recognize in Greenough some large trace of the artist as well as the craftsman.

II

Consider for a moment the attractive young Irish-American sculptor Crawford standing rapt before his splendidly blank Senate pediment, with his theme of the Past and Present of the Republic in his eye. Those were our blithe beginning days when a sculptor might confront his pediment with a heart unburdened by the remembrance of other men's failures in pediments, and with a mind undisciplined by any previous knowledge of the needs of pediments. He did not dread

those bitter acuities of space at right and left, those angles which to modern discrimination often seem so grossly overstuffed when filled, so tragically vacant when left "to let." He had never heard of the "orchestration of shadows," or of "musical repetitions," or of "blonde modeling," or of "keeping the masses white," or of "the creative spiral," or of "mastery through the golden diagonal." He had never been adjured, like the young student Saint-Gaudens, to "beware the *boule de suif*"; on the other hand, he had never been advised, with students coming after Saint-Gaudens, to seek richness of modeling by means of "fatty ends." Sculptural color he would probably have regarded as having something to do with paint. He of course had his own patter, blown abroad by the writers of a too prosaic poetry and a too poetic prose. The real writers, too, used to lend a hand in

presenting art to the public. When the genius of Edward Everett sprang to the rescue of Greenough's Washington, and when Hawthorne sent out winged words about little Miss Hosmer's Zenobia, sculpture was receiving from scholarship a needed sort of first aid.

To return to the Capitol pediment, Crawford's intention and attitude were quite uncomplicated. He had but to snatch the largest theme in sight, and to do his best with shaping its figures one by one inside his triangle of grandeur. The marvel is that he came so near to success. The thing has a kind of distinction from the man's singleness of aim. Since then, scores of our sculptors from coast to coast have solved the pediment problem with varying success. Many of them bring a highly personal and interesting solution. Ward, Bartlett, French, O'Connor, Bitter, Weinman,

the Piccirillis,—these names but begin the list. The world calls us a wasteful nation, a nation that unbuilds as it builds. In the face of this, it is pleasant to know that only a few months ago, Mr. Bartlett's handsome Peace Protecting Genius has been set up in the House pediment, to match Crawford's Past and Present of the Republic at the Senate wing. Nearly a century has elapsed since the Capitol first busied itself with pedimental decorations. Our sculpture has had time to learn in these years.

III

Greenough came first in our line of scholarly sculptors, that class to which W. W. Story later lent great lustre. A Latin inscription of five lines, beginning "Simulacrum istud" and ending "Horatius Greenough faciebat" marks the huge Washington sta-

tue. Well, if I rightly understand this sculptor, I like his "faciebat." It seems more conscientious and less cocksure than the "fecit" with which our sculptors sometimes grace their signatures, and it is certainly not so gruff as the laconic "sc." Between its eight letters one reads the coming and going of those seven diligent Italian years; and we shall deceive ourselves if we count those years wholly lost for our American art. If only Greenough could have enjoyed some of the surplusage of admiration given to his contemporary Powers for his Greek Slave with her well-smoothed body, her manacled Medicean hand, and the accurately fringed mantle at her feet! Though expressly advertised as a nude figure, she is dressed from top to toe in a most unfleshly hard-soft technique which our time calls incompetent, but which 1847 styled "the spiritualization of the marble." The personality of

the artist counted very largely in those days; while Greenough was scholarly and Crawford attractive, and while Randolph Rogers with his bronze doors and his Nydia was what would now be called a good "go-getter," Hiram Powers was easily the main spell-binder of the early group.

With the exception of Rodin's Balzac of fifty years later, no statue of the nineteenth century has ever been so famous as the Greek Slave. It is one of the paradoxes of art that this strangely ill-assorted pair go down the corridors of that great age together, united solely by the bond of greatest fame. It is worth while to examine the two, placed side by side in the museum of our minds. Both are so well known through prints and photographs that many persons who have never really seen either one face to face, now fancy that they have studied both at close range. Both are sculptural anecdotes;

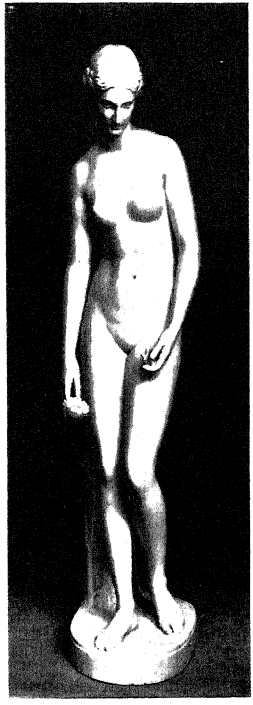
one is told with a leisurely abundance of detail, the other with a swift dash for the climax. The Vermonter's statue is surely meant to be a conscientious rendering "from the Nudo," as our grandparents phrased it, but the Frenchman, in his passion to translate into sculpture a force of literature, has gone far beyond what was to him a daily commonplace, the study of flesh. As for the mere apparel of the subject, one man has scheduled it to the last stitch, while the other has piled it up vehemently into a shapeless monolith from which emerges the triumphant head. Each sculptor doubtless threw his whole soul into revealing the spirit of the matter in hand. Which of the two has succeeded? If the parallel becomes deadly here, Mr. Powers has brought it on himself by his extraordinary fame in three countries. Everything conspired for the celebrity of the Slave,—her creation in Italy,

her fortunate début in England, her travels to America, and, best of all, that body of clergymen deputed to pass upon her moral status. One can but wonder whether every last one of these took the matter seriously, or whether some one of them winked at some other during the deliberations. The sculptor made a modest number of copies of his masterpiece. But other sculptors reproduced their marble visions by the baker's dozen, by the score. In fact, only yesterday a venerable eye-witness of those times reported that a certain American sculptor disposed of no less than two hundred marble copies of a life-sized ideal figure. Appalling iteration! One asks where all the marble came from, and whither it all went. And that sculptor apparently had no idea that in this business of the two hundred copies he was showing himself two hundred times as much salesman as artist.

Fashions alter, in ethics as in art. To-day, such a practitioner would hardly be *persona grata* in the National Sculpture Society.

IV

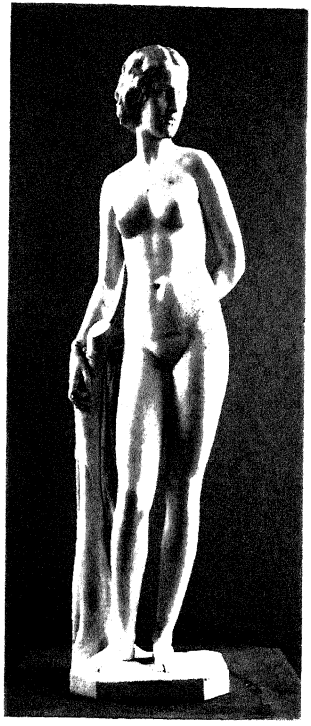
Meanwhile a young modern sculptor at my elbow very civilly inquires, "But why the devil didn't those old boys do their home stuff?" The obvious answer would be, that if the home is where the heart is, then in a very real sense they *did* do their home stuff. They were not at home among the Vermont mountains, or by the Great Lakes. They felt that their birthright in art called them away from their first birthplace to their second. Very soon, too, the all-absorbing topic of slavery will be presented by our sculptors, in a different way and under a more timely aspect. Long before Thomas Ball places his Emancipation



CLYTIE
BY WILLIAM H. RINEHART

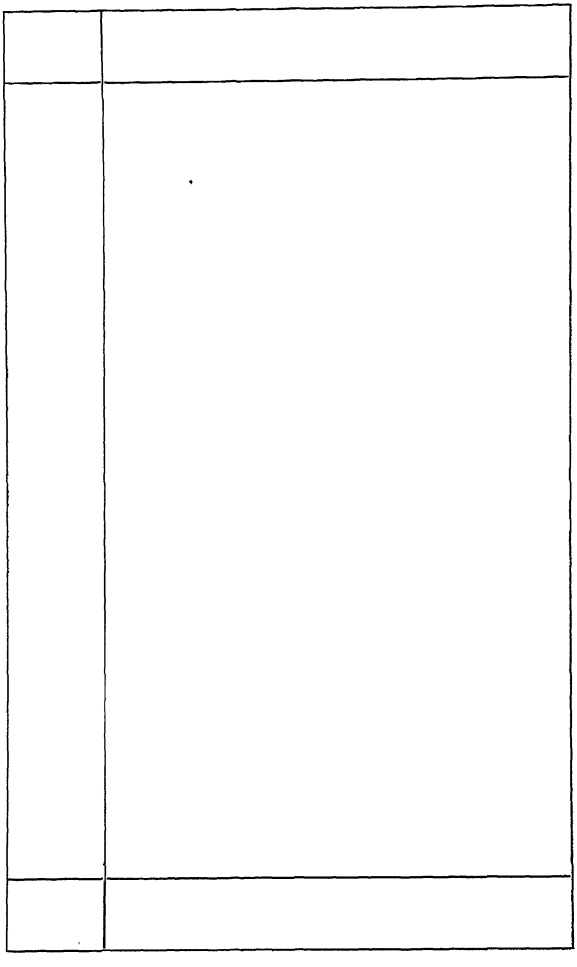
groups in Washington and in Boston, Ward has produced his Freedman, and John Rogers the Slave Auction that in 1860 heralds his long series of popular groups. Choosing subjects both classic and realistic, Miss Hosmer, Miss Ream and other women sculptors have a considerable vogue. From that earlier period remain beautiful classic works by Rinehart, founder of the Rinehart scholarship which much later send abroad Hermon MacNeil, one of the most distinguished of our modern sculptors, and now President of our National Sculpture Society. Rinehart's Clytie, coming but a few years after the Greek Slave, shows a marked advance over her more famous sister. And Erastus Palmer's winning White Captive, although not new in theme, has a great freshness, a delicate realism of treatment. To quote from my article on the exhibition of contemporary sculpture at

the Metropolitan Museum, "No less interesting to the student of sculpture is the kaleidoscopic juxtaposition of Palmer and Manship, two artists of two different generations. Only the width of a room parts the White Captive from the Girl with Gazelles, from which we note that in aim these men are not so different as we once had dreamed. . . As to manner, much might be said besides these two obvious truths; first, that the newest manner is often the oldest, or at least the longest forgotten at the time of its resuscitation, it being a thing which for some obscure human reason or other 'men want dug up again'; and next, that the best manner is that which scarcely shows as a manner at all, but is taken for granted as accompaniment of something more important, the matter and the spirit." It would appear that the young men of to-day are doing much the same



WHITE CAPTIVE
BY ERASTUS D. PALMER

thing as "those old boys" my sculptor friend speaks of: they are seeking modern inspiration from ancient models, but they are doing it with more knowledge, more grace, more humor, more assurance, more style. Style? Perhaps the right word is stylization.



CHAPTER III

OF THREE LEADERS, AND OF MORAL EARNESTNESS IN ART

I

MORAL earnestness? I use both words gladly, and without apology. Why should any one fear that two words so packed with meaning should breed ennui?

A curious fact about our contemporary criticism of art and literature is this: that a criticism which constantly declares itself to be courageous in all ways, and which really has proved itself to be courageous in many ways, often scurries away affrighted the moment it grazes the word *moral*. But why? Does it fear the lash of epithets such as Pharisee, Philistine, Victorian?

The sting has long ago gone out of those hard names.

Over and over again, the critic will aim some well-considered attack upon a certain specified baseness that he perceives and abhors in literature or in art; and then, before he finishes his good work, (and you can see from his look that he believes it to be good work) he suddenly decamps, with the observation, "But this is not in the least a question of morals; it is a question of artistic taste." Sometimes his reader cannot help thinking, by contrast, of that quick word of the old Greek dramatist, protesting against some of the lewd myths of his religion,

"Say not there be adulterers in heaven,
Nor prisoner gods and jailers:—long ago
My heart hath named it vile and shall not alter!"

If someone nowadays should speak like that, might it not clear the air? I

mean, some valued critic of our arts and letters. As it is, we of today leave such work to the censor. And our democracy, avid for class distinctions, accounts the censor considerably lower than the angels. The censor, poor soul, might as well slink at once into the society of the executioner, that most dejected, most rejected figure in history. When the censor says, in his own way, "My heart hath named it vile," nobody pays much attention. But the world might look up if some urbane and trusted critic would write with the moral earnestness of Euripides, dodging nothing. Kenyon Cox used to do so.

What I am driving at is this: Without moral earnestness, (very probably the French would call it seriousness) art cannot prosper in a strange country, under unnative sky. There would be no foundation for laying the cornerstones of art, let alone for building its

high-erected arches. It is a solemn thought, is it not, that American sculptors are today placing their creations on soil that never before was moulded into forms of vivid art such as the Old World knew in the dawn of human culture? For with due regard to our ancient Aztec civilization from Zuñi to Cuzco, our pre-historic New World has nothing to show in any way comparable with those free forms sketched twenty thousand years ago on the walls of the paleolithic caverns in Southwestern Europe, in the very regions where the nineteenth century masters of sculpture were born. To this day, American artists have all the responsibility that comes with the beginnings and transplantings of culture. They are ancestors.

III OF THREE LEADERS AND OF

II

Euripides was creator rather than critic. It may be that the moral earnestness we need must come to us in a thousand unseen ways through the reconciling hands of creation, rather than in one way through the tongue or pen of the critic.

I shall not say that this quality of moral earnestness is found everywhere in American sculpture. But I know that it is found in many places, and in nearly all the high places. Moral earnestness is the very foundation of the only sort of artistic conscience that amounts to much as a contribution toward the higher life in art. It was a strongly developed artistic conscience that often impelled Shrady, like Saint-Gaudens before him, to break the letter of some lesser clause of his contract, in order to keep faith with the spirit of the whole. Consider

the moral earnestness of George Grey Barnard, one of the few modern masters of the imagination as it speaks in stone. You will find that in Barnard this earnestness is part and parcel of the artist he now is; just as it was once part and parcel of Barnard the young student, devoting intense study to the exacting yet large processes of the marble cutter; and by marble cutter I mean not the practitioner, the doomed copyist, but the sort of marble cutter that might call Michelangelo kinsman, and be at ease on the Acropolis with Pheidias and his men. And even if, like myself, you cannot make Barnard's bronze presentment of Lincoln square with your own thrice dear and clear image of this great man, this great symbol of American statesmanship, you will grant that only a high integrity of purpose in the matter could have kept the sculptor steadfast in the truth as he saw it. This funda-

mental earnestness of Barnard's adds a distinction to his most casual or even whimsical words concerning art. When he talks to you about "the cheekbones that make the pathos of a face," a dozen examples of what he means fill your memory.

III

It is a very happy thing for our sculpture that the three men who have most definitely guided its destinies through the past forty years,—Ward, Saint-Gaudens, French,—are hailed as men of moral force. And it is a special cause for congratulation that Mr. French, the youngest-born of the three, still remains with us, still vigorous in achievement. One expects moral earnestness from Mr. French, a New Englander of gracious ancestry, born and bred in the very happiest circumstances of New England life, and

growing up gaily in the light-and-shade of Concord philosophy. One expects it from Mr. Ward, with his open-air Ohio boyhood of mingled zests and rigors, and his later conscientious acceptance of the public duties laid upon any artist who happens also to be an organizer, a "man's man." And whether one expects it or not, one finds it in rich measure in Saint-Gaudens. This child of France, born in Ireland, carries within him all the days of his life the light of an American conscience. Without a compelling moral earnestness, he could never have brought to completion, in face of unimaginable difficulties, some of the masterpieces on which his fame rests.

Every artist knows of the fourteen years during which the Shaw monument remained in his studio, never long absent from his thought. Many are familiar with the repeated trials through which his vision of General

Sherman and the Angel of Victory-Peace finally emerged triumphant. A man once told his dentist of Saint-Gaudens, of the Shaw monument, of the fourteen years. "Well," said the dentist, twirling his little mahogany stand of bright tools, in complacent recollection of some of his own swifter victories, "he couldn't have been a very smart artist, to take all that time." No, indeed, Saint-Gaudens was not a very smart artist. The very smart artist, one concludes, can flourish for his day without a deep foundation of moral earnestness. Saint-Gaudens was simply the very great artist. With Mr. Ward and Mr. French, he made integrity and the artistic conscience the only natural choice for scores of young sculptors now influencing our lives. What these three leaders have thus contributed of moral beauty, of needed moral earnestness to our society, will never be measured. It is

MORAL EARNESTNESS IN ART

too far-reaching and too deep-seated. Most observers consider that a certain superficiality mars American life. Although we need not join those defeatists who believe that this defect in itself spells our ruin, we shall certainly admit that the defect exists. All honor, then, to the moral earnestness that today, largely because of these three leaders, is so much a part of the spirit of American sculpture.

The sculptor's work means far more than staying in a studio and luring visions into clay or stone or bronze. His business isn't altogether a wrestling with angels. There's a certain amount of coping with committees; and his visions are often none the worse for the honest revisions that other men may suggest. The sculptor's masterpiece must be able to resist the spiritual wear-and-tear of the marketplace of the world's opinion. It is no masterpiece unless it can in the

end do that. And if, as it stands, the work is a silent influence against superficiality and emptiness, something is gained for American life. Glad sculpture as well as grave sculpture can exert that influence.

IV

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS WARD

No one is as disdainful of the early Victorians as the late Victorians used to be. In the strength of the 'eighties and 'nineties our studios often resounded with mutterings against the feebleness of the 'fifties. Perhaps some envy of certain primitive successes was mingled with this righteous wrath. But after all, our Powerses and Rogerses were not in the least the mere early worms their successors once said they were. A juster perspective invites the reflection that American sculpture in its development needed

the influence of the Greek Slave and her thousand daughters as it has needed that of the Rock Creek figure, of the Lincoln Memorial, and of the fire-new work beautifully presented by our youngest group of sculptors. Those marble shapes now dwelling vaguely somewhere in the dark corridors of relegation had once a thrilling part to play. They were our ideals, to be seen, prized and possessed in the name of art. So, the old songs of blame have long been out of date. But they did good service in the days when John Quincy Adams Ward, a natural leader of men, turned a heroic back on Europe as a place for the American artist to live in. Go there to study, but not to stay, was his word.

Vision, veracity, virility are the three V's that stamped his life and work. Like his friend Howells, he was Ohio-born; both men had boyhood aspirations that carried them away from

their Middle-Border pioneer activities into the more genial milieu to be found among our Eastern salt-water cities. Living from 1830 to 1910, and working sixty years in his art, Ward has rightly been called the Colossus that bestrides the two separate worlds of our former and latter periods in sculpture. Though he founded no school, his influence has been far-reaching. His Beecher statue, flanked by its two lyrical groups, his Garfield monument with its attendant epic groups of War and Peace, his noble equestrian figure of General Thomas are among a host of sterling works that prove him the "all round" sculptor. In his youth, he played a well-known and highly practical part in the making of Brown's equestrian statue of Washington, one of the best-praised and worst-placed monuments in the city of New York. Since the praise is deserved, the placing discredits us far more than it does

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS WARD

the heroic artists who carried the work to completion. All sculptors who succeed in their equestrian statues are heroic; even if they are not heroes when they begin such enterprises they achieve heroism before they finish them. And if that is true to-day, with our more highly organized methods both of the sculptor's art and of the bronze-founder's science, what must it have been in 1856, when Brown's Washington, our second equestrian statue, first saw the light? In later life, Ward sometimes spoke in whimsical recollection of industrious apprentice days that he, a luckier type of Jonah, spent within the belly of the horse cast in bronze by French workmen assisting Brown.

Ward had in his nature and in his art the great elements of the precursor. He represents not only the pioneer in American sculpture, but in no small measure and sometimes in a singular

way, the prophet. Witness the dog with scalloped mane in his admirable group of the Indian Hunter, a work that much impressed the youthful Saint-Gaudens, fresh from years of study among European masters and masterpieces. Here we have a foretaste of that delightful treatment of animal form found in the bronzes of the young men from the American Academy in Rome. To be sure, Ward's dog does not seem to spring forward full-armed in a beautifully conventionalized linear panoply of bone and muscle resurrected from some newly revealed Klazomenian sarcophagus; he is not quite so Cretanly curled as some of the appealing animal figures of today, but 't is enough, 't will serve. And the whole group, as seen happily placed in Central Park, reveals the naturalism in which Ward envelops his own peculiar kind of classicism. For a nobler instance of Ward's for-

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ward-looking quality, choose the bronze Washington standing on the steps of the Sub-Treasury in New York, in the very heart of all our heart-breaking yet inspiring financial traffic. That statue is not merely a portrait of Washington, but a symbolic expression of early American greatness in leadership.

A comparison between the Ward Washington and the Houdon Washington is permitted here; Houdon's position as a commanding figure among the sculptors of all time is too securely based on his incomparable busts and on his Voltaire at the Comédie-Française to be in the least disturbed by any of our observations. Remembering that Ward's task was naturally less difficult than Houdon's, we shall do no injustice to our earliest foreign master in sculpture when we remark that Ward's Washington, rather than Houdon's, bears away the palm for



STATUE OF WASHINGTON
BY JOHN QUINCY ADAMS WARD

the larger monumental qualities of design. The great Frenchman's work is cumbered from the waist down with naturalistic emblems from field and forum. Neither ploughshare nor fasces nor cane nor sword nor cloak are omitted. Their insistence is of course redeemed in general by Houdon's general mastery, and in particular by his particular prowess in rendering the head; it is Houdon's glory that in some inexplicable way his hand makes every face it touches come alive. Ward's statue, appearing almost a century later, owes something to Houdon; every portrait statue of Washington, if worth much, will owe something to Houdon. But what we would especially note is, that in this virile presentment of Washington, Ward has chosen the better part of both realism and classicism. The work has something of the serenity of synthesis and elimination of detail that we love in

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the Parthenon masterpieces, yet it has enough of modern individualism and modern insistence upon expression and emotion to satisfy the longings of the everyday American spectator.

Our reference to the super-symbolism in Houdon's Washington (a flaw partly explained, it may be, by the inexorable demands of our forefathers as well as of practical marble-cutting) leads us to the observation that to-day, taken by and large, French monumental art suffers enormously from emblematic excrescences. What scales of justice and of mermaids, what pinions of angels and eagles and doves, what garlands and garters and gaiters, what palettes and portfolios, what seines and scrolls and T-squares have been gathered together in the French marketplaces as candidates for immortality! And what complication of silhouette, what lack of massing in light and shade, have resulted thereby!

This paradox of the over-explained wrongs the clear French mind, the intuitive French eye. How is it in our own country? But I studiously avoid breathing any word here of any lesson for our own sculptors. It is enough to point out that a healthy, if high-strung, revolt against all this easy off-hand grab-bag naturalistic symbolism will not only bring in its train the sculpture of serious protest; it will also pick up on its fringes plenty of those tongue-in-cheek specimens of so-called sculpture familiar in our century. From Rodin's candle-lit and blanketed Balzac of the previous generation down to the latest Greenwich Village absurdity, in which human portraiture once more achieves its apotheosis on the surface of an egg, such revolt is visible. It is of course a revolt against many things besides an overdone symbolism; but the symbolism may well serve as a symbol for the

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rest. All honor then to the austerity of Ward's Washington.

As Ward in his youth worked for an older man, so he himself in his later years had the good fortune to meet the newer ideals in his art through collaboration with younger sculptors. Mr. Bartlett's sympathetic assistance is apparent in the Stock Exchange pediment, and in the equestrian statue of General Hancock, for Fairmount Park. This last was the work that engaged Ward's thought to the very day of his death. But nowhere shall we study Ward better than in the statue of Washington. Here we see this sculptor as he himself would wish to be seen; a sculptor of mankind at its most heroic, for mankind at its daily average. "Our work," he often said, "must touch the ordinary human heart." His rugged, straightforward genius was not suited for revealing the more exquisite aspects of beauty, the more whimsical

secrets of the soul. Never fear; later sculptors, both men and women, will fully attend to those things. In the words of Ward's historic observation to the Farragut statue committee, "Give the younger man the chance!"

V

AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

Born eighteen years after Ward, and dying while Ward still had three years of strenuous work before him, Augustus Saint-Gaudens lives in our annals as the most illustrious figure in American art. Both the Old World and the New see it so.

Brought to this country at the age of six months, the Dublin-born child of a French father and an Irish mother, he soon became more American than the Americans themselves. We see him first as the typical New York sidewalk boy, learning not much in

school, but far more from eager contacts in the city boy's world of home, parents, streets, policemen, processions; the atmosphere of the Civil War stirs his young blood, and will long afterward quicken his sculpture of our Civil War heroes. At fourteen he is by day a cameo-cutter's apprentice, by night a rapt student of drawing at Cooper Institute. At nineteen, with a hundred dollars and his father's blessing, he sails abroad for his first three years of foreign study and travel; in Paris and Rome he learns and earns; he has a stout heart, a lean purse, and an undying passion for his art. His return to New York with a few small commissions picked up, as the custom then was, from American travellers sojourning in Rome; his second stay abroad; his early struggles to obtain a footing; his marriage and subsequent three years in Paris while creating the Farragut; his ardent



STATUE OF ADMIRAL FARRAGUT
BY AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

friendship with Stanford White, John La Farge, and other strong personalities of the day;—surely all this seems quite the usual story. But Saint-Gaudens had always his own innermost unusualness that somehow placed him above his fellows; and the victorious completion of the Farragut in 1881 was but the first of a long line of signal triumphs. And even his almost forgotten triumphs (for example, the great improvement in our coinage initiated by his endeavor) are signal triumphs. There was no branch of his art in which he did not excel; it was an art designed in general for the flowingness of bronze rather than for reproduction within the confines of the marble block.

Too often versatility connotes a superficiality of mind, an easily satisfied outlook. Not so with Saint-Gaudens. He was if anything over-critical of his work; for instance, he never forgot

that the snare of the picturesque was in his path, as it is in the path of every sculptor trying to infuse a genial human warmth into the sculptural order. His knowledge in the lesser art of cameo-cutting, a knowledge which in some sculptors would have been swept aside as detrimental to a spacious style, helped rather than hindered him in his advance toward his ultimate mastery over relief of all kinds, —the coin, the intimate portrait medallion, the heroic monumental relief. He may be truly said to have invented that charming form of bas-relief likeness shown in the portraits of the Schiff children, the Butler children, Bastien-Lepage, Violet Sargent, and many others. Nothing quite like these works had ever before been produced, either in the French medalists' fertile art of the nineteenth century or in that still richer period of the Italian Renaissance medal, heralded

by Pisano. And yet, since little in the field of art is utterly original, we are reminded here of that old saying about the power of the man meeting the power of the moment. In beautiful angel-figures such as the Amor-Caritas in high relief, Saint-Gaudens realized and expressed the spiritual meanings of other artists of his time, both sculptors and painters; this we see when we study French's noble Angel of Death, and the Burne-Jones figures on their golden stair.

Critics are divided, not as to the greatness of Saint-Gaudens, but as to the work which best stores up within itself the true elements of his greatness. Those who have seen tears start from the eyelids of gray veterans standing before the Shaw Memorial will perhaps say the Shaw, while those who perceive with delight all that the sculptor has attained in the Sherman equestrian group, with its thrilling

harmony of spiritual and realistic presentation, will perhaps say the Sherman. Londoners and Chicagoans will rest content in their great possession of the standing Lincoln. Others again will find their truest vision of this artist's power in the enfolded mystery of the Rock Creek figure, sometimes called Nirvana, but better named the Peace of God. And if (as I think) this is indeed his consummate, his culminating work, how strange that it is, in a sense, a somewhat unexpected, uncharacteristic work! In its profound other-worldliness, it seems as withdrawn from the Sherman and the Puritan and the Farragut as from those happy portrait-reliefs of living beings in their loveliness or strength. How often artists have mused on the beauty of the head of this figure! Every trace of artistic knowingness is eliminated here; nothing so vain and petty as any suggestion of accomplished tech-

nique intrudes. The beholder's attention is directed solely toward whatever inner meaning he finds in those shadowed lineaments.

Saint-Gaudens had the power of attracting to his service young men and women of true artistic ability. MacMonnies, Flanagan, Fraser, Weinman, Martiny, Proctor, Hering, Miss Grimes, Miss Ward,—all of these have won distinction in their own personal work in sculpture; some among them are now past masters. But a higher power than that of winning the enthusiastic loyalty of youth belonged to Saint-Gaudens. He had also the gift of drawing from each worker something finer and more precious than anything that this worker had ever before possessed. He compelled his assistants to build better than they knew. It is part of this sculptor's glory that no one can ever mistake the subsequent work of his "arrived"

pupils, even the most famous of these, for the work of Saint-Gaudens. In anonymous service to him, they best perfected themselves as individual artists.

How I wish I might make myself clear when touching this vexed subject of apprenticeship! The romantic part of the world dwelling far from the realities of studio life loves to picture a pathetic situation of gifted youth silently wasting its genius in saving the day for the commonplace performances of a middle-aged employer. But this poetic view squares with cinema ideals rather than with the facts. At a recent exhibition of weird works by the immature young sculptor X, (such shows at times add to the gayety of New York) I heard an ardent lady worshipper of something she called "the new spirit of expressionism," denounce the greed and vanity of the middle-aged sculptor Y, basely employ-

ing the bright unrecognized wings of X, to give fire and movement to the pedestrian Y inventions. Ah, if that lady only knew the truth about X and Y! But it was closing-time, and I made no attempt to tell her the truth; it would have seemed rather gray and commonplace compared with her own glamorous moving-picturization of studio life. All her thought was of heroism and oppression, not of work and wages. Yet I might at least have given her this one helpful fact; that almost without exception, the successful sculptors of to-day look back with gratitude toward the multitudinous activities of their young apprenticeships; sometimes they even feel a secret amazement that their former masters should have put up with them so long.

VI

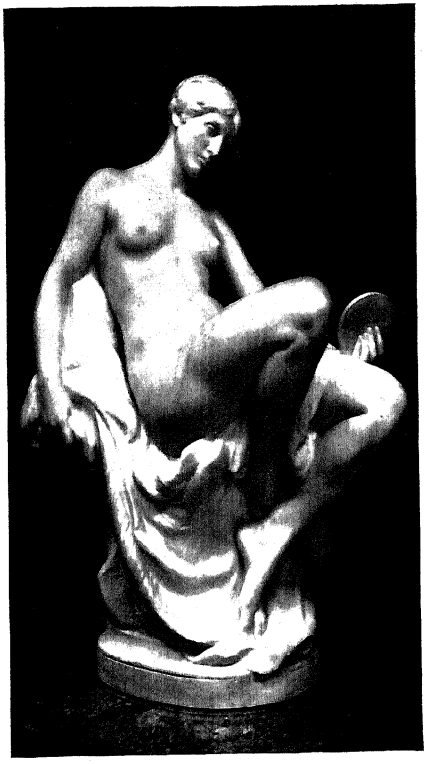
DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH

Last summer, revisiting Concord after many years, I crossed "the rude bridge that arched the flood," and found Mr. French's Minute Man, embattled still, though embowered in quietness, and made safe from the ruder motor traffic of the day. It seemed incredible that a youth of twenty-three, with no models except the Apollo Belvidere and himself, and with no instruction beyond that derived from a month in Ward's studio and from Dr. Rimmer's anatomy lectures, could have produced a statue so competent and so sculptural as this. Then I remembered that in 1919 the most proudly acclaimed work of American art for the year was Mr. French's marble figure of Memory; and it was interesting to note that the Minute Man, however immediately

convincing in general appeal, appeared in a sense as the work of an artist older than the sculptor of the Memory. For the Minute Man has here and there a lean gravity of modeling that we rightly or wrongly associate with passing maturity, while the forms of the Memory are rich and commanding, yet enveloped with that serenity for which we have no better word than classic. And what is the true meaning of classic, except as it describes that which is fresh and vivid to-day, yet has the underlying force of permanence, the very tide of immortality flowing in its veins? Many of our artists acquire the classic spirit, many have it thrust upon them, some reject it utterly. But Mr. French *is* the classic spirit personified among us; born so, not made so; and what he creates is illumined by his understanding of the dignity of the human soul, and by his belief that beauty and truth are acceptable

to the human mind. This gracious seated figure of Memory, gazing calmly into the glass that reflects, not her own person but the shapes of the past, is admirably composed from every point of view and within the natural limits of the marble. A critic has written of it as "showing at its best Mr. French's idealism, and being at the same time a masterly study of the nude, true to the nobler forms of nature, yet with a skillful avoidance of what is commonly known as realism." That phrase "true to the nobler forms of nature" well describes this sculptor's great ideal figures. Mr. French is to-day the dean of American sculpture, the honorary President of the National Sculpture Society; a presence with all the gracious authority conferred by deanship, and with nothing whatever of the dry ancientry at times associated with that honor.

There is something of the unexpect-



MEMORY
BY DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH

ed in the course of every great artist. With Ward it is one thing, with Saint-Gaudens another. With Daniel Chester French, born in Exeter, New Hampshire, in 1850, the unexpected thing is that in his art education he seems somehow to have skipped the slow Preamble and the voluminous Whereas, and to have reached almost at a bound the precincts of the Resolved. Concord has never lacked favorite sons, and young Daniel among the lions of that town of his later boyhood felt only their appreciation and encouragement. But with one year in Florence, spent largely under the genial influence of Thomas Ball, sculptor of the first equestrian monument placed in New England, his so-called study-period ends. A pediment for the St. Louis Custom House awaits him in 1877; within the next few years he executes similar architectural sculpture for Philadelphia and Boston.

DANIEL CHESTER FRENCH

In 1879 he models from life his beautiful portrait bust of Emerson.

Surely we cannot say that his art education was finished before these things were attempted. It progressed with them, and with those other creations, more idealistic in type, in which his imagination had fuller play. When in 1888 he went to Paris to make the model for his marble statue of General Cass of Michigan, he went as a master, yet as a seeker; one well prepared to gain without groping all that was worth while in the influence of the time and place. Five years later, at the Columbian Exposition, his genius makes an extraordinary appeal to his fellow-countrymen in two imposing works, the Republic and the consoling Angel of Death. These of course differ widely in their inspiration and in the emotion they arouse, but they are equally eloquent. The Gallaudet group, placed in Washington in 1889, had already

spoken its message to the human heart. An inner radiance of the spirit shines from that very solidly and beautifully composed group of the great teacher and the little deaf-mute; nowhere else in sculpture have we found so adequate and touching an expression of the fatherliness that should animate those who teach, and of the trust of those who must needs learn or be lost. Who would have guessed that sculpture could have found out this way of saying Faith, Hope, and Charity? And beneath all that captivates the general public, how much there is in the Angel, the Republic, and the Gallaudet that remains of special interest to artists, because of the individual mastery of a special problem! In collaboration with Mr. Potter, the accomplished master of animal sculpture, Mr. French has created some of our most notable equestrian statues; the General Grant and

the General Meade for Philadelphia, the General Washington, presented to France by an association of American women, the General Hooker for Boston. Other works of high import are the majestic Alma Mater at Columbia University, the bronze doors in delicately shadowed relief for the Boston Public Library, the colossal seated bronze figure of Lincoln enshrined within the Lincoln Memorial at Washington.

Once again let it be said, a man's work shows his mind. What Mr. French's art has given to our country is something greatly needed here today, that quality which for lack of a better name we call urbanity. There ought to be a higher word for this gift, but Matthew Arnold had to put up with the term, and so must I. The harried dweller in our American *urbs* is often far from urbane, more's the pity. But the urbanity we need now, in our arts, our letters, our life, is

something that goes deeper than courtesy; it is something that is allied to the spirit of Amor-Caritas seen not only in the Saint-Gaudens angel of that name, but also in Mr. French's Alma Mater, and in his Angel of Death. Even in the gesture of the Republic's arms, and in the very folds of her garments, there is a reminder of that large charitable humanist urbanity all nations need when trying to know themselves and each other. Mr. French is the humanist among our American sculptors. But he is empathically not of that type of humanist darkly described by Professor Kallen as living "beside life, not in it." His position among our sculptors is more than honorary; it is that of the generous co-worker and helper, especially sympathetic toward youth and its aspirations. What Mr. French does seems effortless, but beneath that apparent ease is a profound knowledge of all

the armature, both mechanical and intellectual, that holds the sculptor's art in true poise and balance. Work from his hands may be the monumental or the exquisite; it is imagined simply and naturally, as if this artist knew no other way than the beautiful way. How deeply our democracy needs the best he has to give!

VII

Our twentieth century admits that the latter years of the nineteenth century were spacious years in our sculpture, and that there are as yet no leaders who overtop these three. With these will always be associated, in the minds of those who know things as they are, that distinguished artist Olin Warner, whose death cut short a career splendidly ready for its zenith. For some unknown reason, his work has missed something of its due praise

among us; time will perhaps readjust this. The delightful caryatids of his fountain at Portland, Oregon, are indeed greatly prized; his portrait statues are truly sculptural in their ensemble, and fine in their characterization; and with the passing of years, his spirited yet beautifully classic portrait busts of Alden Weir, of Cottier, and of Maud Morgan gain rather than lose in the esteem of the student.

A much later leader, also lost before winning the heights to which he aspired, was Karl Bitter, that sensitive, swift-minded, deft-handed sculptor whose ardent intellectual curiosity kept him still the seeker for newer and more vital ways of sculptural expression. His tragic death was not unlike Warner's; Warner was thrown from his bicycle in Central Park, Bitter was struck down by an automobile in front of the Opera House. Both men were of those *êtres d' élite* that Art needs

MORAL EARNESTNESS IN ART

as her interpreters. But what a contrast in their lives, their characters, their sculptural interpretations! Warner was of the highest type of New Englander of Puritan descent, a courageous worshipper of beauty, and at his best in revealing beauty in classic guise; he has been called the Pilgrim homesick for Hellas; Bitter was of the highest type of the foreign-born, a Viennese eagerly assuming the duties of American citizenship. A gallant figure, already before his coming among us he was imbued with various Old World ideals in art, many of which he afterward rejected as flamboyant, frivolous. No sculptor of our time has made a swifter and steadier advance in sculptural power throughout a busy and varied career. Warner and Bitter; the deep-minded and the quick-minded; the spirit of American sculpture needed both these men, and felt their loss.

III OF THREE LEADERS

CHAPTER IV

OF EXPOSITIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

I

AN unpublished satiric drawing of the 'eighties shows a family of American tourists in the Louvre. They contemplate the Melian Venus. With one exception, they are dumb with awe. The exception is Aunt Maria, the masterful old lady in the foreground. Aunt Maria has seen men and cities, but she doesn't know as there's much that can beat South Bend. So

"Aunt Maria gazes with distrust
 Upon the goddess in her bloom perennial.
'Talk about art,—you should have seen the
 bust,
The butter bust we had at our Centennial.'"

The Sleeping Iolanthe in butter! In 1876, her name melted in the American mouth. Though barred from the Fine Arts section, she was believed by many to express the spirit of American art. Shamed by her popularity, certain sensitive American artists did not quite recover a jubilant tone until, long years afterward, a full-sized Melian Venus in chocolate contributed to the gayety of the greatest of French expositions. After that, the butter bust incident weighed less heavily on thoughtful minds.

Just before our Centennial exposition, the scholarly John Fiske, admitting that "the classical picture and the undraped statue" have "a high place in our esteem," ruefully adds that "it will probably be some time before genuine art ceases to be an exotic among us, and becomes a plant of unhindered native growth." The Centennial showed us the truth of just

that. The Centennial was a glory, and a profound disturbance. To our sculpture, this disturbance was its great gain. For the first time, the American sculptor saw his work side by side with that of Europeans. He was dismayed. He had had his doubts, his forebodings. He now perceived for a certainty that in spite of half a century spent in the pursuit of all the best that Italian pseudo-classicism could offer, our apprentice days in sculpture, far from being well over, were scarcely begun. Perhaps a fresh start was needed. At a time when Munich, as well as Paris, was calling to the young painter, Paris, rather than Rome or Florence, beckoned to the sculptor. New forces were abroad in art, and American sculpture of the next generation profited eagerly from the vigorous new French school.

II

The lesson taught by the Columbian exposition of 1893 was just as important as that learned from the Centennial, though far less sobering. A holiday spirit, not without dignity, spoke from those pleasure-domes and lagoons and abounding sculptural forms of the White City. The progress made by our art during seventeen years packed with artistic adventure and endeavor was blown abroad in triumph. On the whole, we were justified in our joy. As the Centennial by its dismaying jolt had enlarged the outlook of our artists, so the Columbian, by its varied harmonies, liberated the imagination of the public, of the art-lover. To a marked extent, it created anew the art-lover, a personage already made possible by the prosperity following the conclusion of the Civil War. In the World's Fair of 1893,

the apparently inexhaustible advantages of a sympathetic collaboration between architect, painter, sculptor, and landscape architect were for the first time sketched out large for the American vision. Our many succeeding expositions have of course emphasized and amplified the suggestions so gallantly given and so eagerly noted in 1893. Not that our whole broad land is to-day the dwelling-place of beauty. Far from it. Great reaches of time and great strivings of the spirit must match our great stretches of space before art is everywhere at home here. And collaboration at its best is jointly and severally a striving of the spirit.

In 1825, when Charles Bulfinch, then architect of the Capitol, receives an inquiry "respecting the ornaments wanted for the pediment of the Capitol," and writes in answer that "the object of advertising was to obtain designs in various styles, from which

to select one," an ardent collaboration between sculptor and architect was clearly not the order of the day. The hard fate of Greenough's Olympian Washington, dragged in 1843 from inner shrine to outdoor platform, shows that in almost twenty years conditions had not changed. For a long time after that, a work of sculpture was seldom considered, during its creation, with special reference to its destined surroundings. Artist and public satisfied themselves with the bland half-truth that a good thing looks well anywhere. There were of course vague gestures of collaboration when the first statues were placed in Central Park; and in the good fellowship existing between students of the different arts in the few schools we had here as well as in the foreign schools there was a basis for later harmonious co-operation. But the Saint-Gaudens Farragut, unveiled in 1881,

and showing in detail and ensemble the results of an extraordinarily happy and sympathetic collaboration, roused the minds of all artists. And twelve years afterward, the intelligent public was fully ready to appreciate the happy collaborations it saw on every hand at the Fair.

III

Expositions bring in their train certain evils. Is superficiality one of these? In theory, sculptural work for exposition buildings and approaches and vistas must often stress too much the gala-day aspect of life; it must sound the hurrah at any cost; the note is gayety and triumph; let no other chord intrude. So much for theory. As a matter of fact, the making of red-letter-day sculpture injures only those sculptors who are already too much enamoured of the "façade and froth" side of human achievement.

Nothing could be more serious in matter or in manner than was Mr. French's stately Republic, a dominant note of the plan of the Columbian Exposition. And no work was more thoroughly appreciated. Some of the very gayest of our exposition sculptures owe their vitality to the very serious studies and the very solid mastery of the artists who have produced them. There was wide-spread regret because the MacMonnies Fountain, that thing of joy for the exposition of 1893, could not sprinkle its dews permanently for our refreshment. And in our later expositions, there have always been temporary works achieved with bravura by the artist, enjoyed without reservation by the public, and (often with a real sadness of farewell) consigned to oblivion by the powers. The story of the Fair of 1893, the exemplar, one might say, for subsequent celebrations, has

been exceedingly well told by Mr. Charles Moore, in his recently published Life of Daniel Burnham. Nowhere else will one find so true and inspiring a picture of our American architects, painters, sculptors, and landscape gardeners working together in exalted collaboration. Those men set a great standard and a great stride for artists of the present century. To quote from Mr. Moore's book a paragraph concerning the sculptors:

"Marshalled by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the sculptors for the first time in America took their rightful place in co-operation with the architects. And what a troop they were. There was Daniel French, embodying the spirit of permanence and clear-sightedness in the serene figure of the Republic that graciously presided over the Court of Honor; and again, in conjunction with Edward Potter, manifesting sustained ability in the quad-

riga surmounting the Peristyle; Frederick MacMonnies, giving vent to the exuberance of America in the joyous fountain that lent gayety to the great central motive of the Fair; Olin Warner, whose early death lost to the country an artist on the way to the heights; Paul Bartlett, then a promise which opportunity has fulfilled; Edwin Kemeys, with his animal sculpture that came to attract all the money Theodore Roosevelt could spare for art; and Louis Saint-Gaudens, wanting only the intellectual element to put him in the same class with his brother; and Karl Bitter, capable and conscientious, whose accidental death brought grief to a host of admirers; and Lorado Taft, who has put the ethereal, haunting spirit of the Great Lakes into his Chicago fountain; Larkin Mead, sculptor of the old school; Phimister Proctor, lover of American animals; besides Bela Pratt, Rohl-Smith, Bush-

Brown, Rideout, Boyle, Waagen, Bauer, Martiny, Blenkenship, and the satisfactory Partridge."

Later Fairs have but exemplified what was well suggested by the White City. The Exposition at San Francisco, most recent of all, and taking place in bright evanescence while Europe was already in the bitter throes of the World War, brought forward, under the vigorous direction of Mr. Calder, sculptor of the Pioneer Mother and of the Triumph of Energy, much that was stimulating and fresh in our sculpture, even though none of these American exhibits labelled themselves as Dynamic Decompositions, and few attempted the earnest sort of modernism found in French works such as Bernard's Maiden with Water Jar. The fountain in particular was delightfully renewed in Mr. Aitken's Fountain of the Earth, Mrs. Burroughs's Fountain of Youth, Mr. Taft's Frag-

ment from the Fountain of Time, Mrs. Whitney's Fountain with Pristine Motives from Aztec Civilization, Mr. Putnam's Fountain with Mermaids, and Miss Longman's Fountain of Ceres. Individual pieces such as William Sergeant Kendall's half-length portrait of a peasant girl, carved in wood and realistically colored, attracted attention for successful originality.

IV

By and large, our expositions have done three good things for sculpture. They have managed to dislodge, even from the most painstaking of workers, a fearless immediacy of expression in their art. They have introduced to the public, in a large way on the terrace and in an intimate way within the gallery, the most interesting sculptors of the time. Above all, they have fostered and amazingly developed the

give-and-take of collaboration in the arts. This last is their best gift to the spirit of American sculpture; it is the gift of the broader mind.

Our American Academy in Rome, with its stirring legend, "Not merely fellowships, but fellowship," is the direct outcome of the World's Fair of 1893. Burnham, McKim, Mead, La Farge, Millet, Saint-Gaudens, and other artists who by collaboration made that Fair a thing of beauty resolved then and there that younger men should have such advantages as these that they themselves had gained by working together. Through their efforts, the project took shape. Though a National institution, our American Academy in Rome is endowed and maintained by private citizens. Its beneficiaries are young sculptors, painters, architects, classical scholars, landscape architects, and musicians who have already shown themselves signally fit-

ted for their chosen work, and who, for the sake of our country's art, ought to have the benefit of the three years of intensive and inter-related study in Rome. To-day, our Academy in Rome is regarded as the most important modern influence in American sculpture. "My reason for thinking it admirable," writes Saint-Gaudens, "is my belief that the strenuous competition required to gain access to the Villa Medici, as well as the three years of study in that wonderful spot, tend to a more earnest and thorough training than could elsewhere be gained under the present conditions of life in our times."

IV OF EXPOSITIONS

CHAPTER V

THE STATUE AND THE BUST AND THE IDEAL FIGURE

I

As originally planned, the title of the following chapter was The Statue and the Bust, and the Wart Well Lost. For I have often felt (and who has not?) that the Cromwellian forthrighteousness in the matter of that wart has been over-estimated. However, on second thought, it would seem wiser to suggest the possibility of occasional ideal presentation rather than to decry the virtues of exact realism in commemorative portraiture. Hence the more dignified heading seen above. And how does that old case of idealism *vs.* realism stand at present

in the field of the portrait statue? Before answering this question, let us consider for a moment the modern sculptor's preparation for his life-work.

Following hard upon the three leaders who remain central figures in our hundred years of sculpture came the outriders of that large and ever increasing group whose creative genius, fostered by the training enthusiastically received in the French school, now stands four-square among us. The men and women of this group are the present-day nucleus of sculptural activity here. Most of them keep a firm footing in two centuries; they still profit by the light of the later nineteenth century French masters, and they themselves pass on their own clear new light to twentieth century learners. When the names of Falguière and Mercié, Dubois and Chapu, Saint-Marceaux and Frémiet and Rodin are

spoken, these men and women are thrilled, just as Heine's Grenadier was thrilled by an imagined footstep; and these men and women know why Schumann's song soars up into the Marseillaise. They know that their French masters once gave them something priceless, yet left them free to use the gift according to their own bent and will. The principles taught in the atelier seemed to them necessary and suggestive, not despotic.

To-day, both the New World and the Old are altered. Good art schools are now found in most of our large cities; as far as mere technical training is concerned, opportunities for art-study are at present brighter here than in Europe. But nothing can ever replace the inspiration given by the sight of European masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture on European soil. Therefore we no longer say with Ward, "Go abroad to

study, but not to stay." We say instead, "Remain at home for your study, but go abroad during vacation periods for travel and for inspiration." A generation ago, the eager young student body of returning painters and sculptors would not have believed that this change of base in an artist's education could occur within their lifetime.

Until rather lately, the youthful sculptor returning to America to practise his profession would hope first of all to make a portrait bust or two, eking out his income by teaching classes in modeling, or by assisting some more experienced sculptor in developing important commissions. Then if he were lucky, a fountain figure for some one's garden or a portrait statue for his native town would loom up on his horizon, and he would be fairly started on his way to glory.

II

The portrait statue; imperishable bronze trousers; the frock-coat immortalized. Art thou there, truepenny?

Most of those persons who are now confirmed haters of sculpture probably became so through having in tender childhood looked too long on the bronze portrait statue when it was dark, when it gave its color all wrong to the countenance of some beloved hero. Even among sculptors there are many who admit a secret distaste for the portrait statue, except when it proceeds from the art of the rare absolute master. Hearing the grumblings of sculptors as to the difficulties of this form, one is tempted to ask with Mr. Caudle, "If painful, why so often do it?" The answer is, "The portrait statue is what committees want, and will pay for. The portrait statue is my

children's bread; the ideal figure will not keep them in shoes."

So then, the situation must be examined on all sides. And is there not a certain high courage in that sculptor who takes his age as it is, and, like Saint-Gaudens and Ward, manfully makes the truthful best out of Peter Cooper's whiskers, and Horace Greeley's long-legged boots? "But," retorts the sculptor, "the whiskers we can endure and celebrate; the boots are not too much to bear. These things are not decorative, but they have character, they tell their times. It is the frock-coat and the trousers that paralyze our imagination."

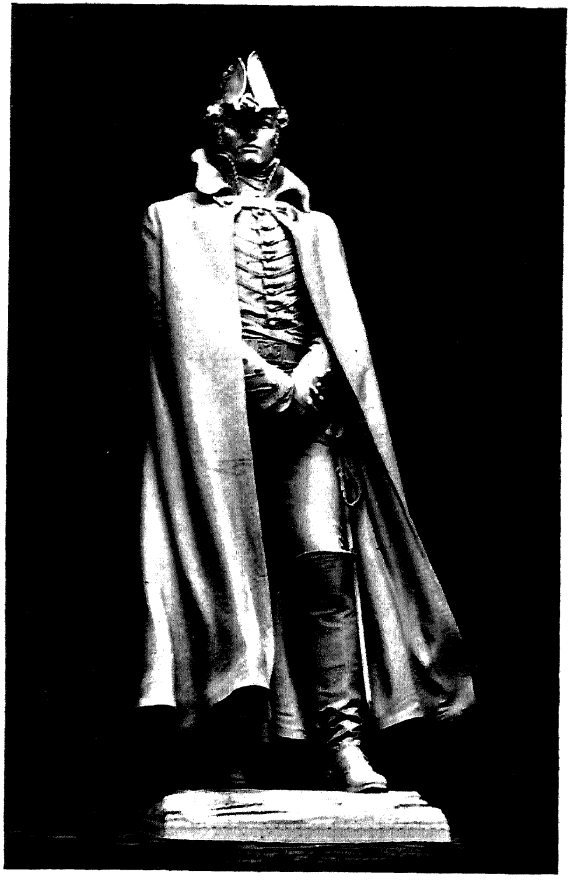
Perhaps it will never be known how much the modern male costume, convenient indeed, but uncomely,—tyrannously uniform in its formlessness, and rejecting any individuality as an indecency,—has contributed to the rather wide indifference of the

public toward the usual dark effigy of estimable manhood set up in the marketplace. Well, no conflict, no drama! If there were no inherent difficulties in the problem of the portrait statue, there would be no exultation for the sculptor in his successful solution. True, our days lack beauty; man's apparel is not a sculptural delight. But unless the artist can do something to mend matters, there is little use in mournfully reminding the world that there was no Wragg by the Ilissus. It is interesting to mark how our American sculptors have come out from their clash with the commonplace, and whether they emerge as victors or vanquished.

III

Looking at the general assembly of portrait statues here, we see at once that these works are freer and happier

when their subjects, to alter Washington's historic words, permit "some little deviation in *disfavor* of modern costume." Mr. Quinn, in his statue of Edwin Booth, and Mr. Weinman, in his spirited Macomb, have profited sculpturally by such permissions. Most of the bronze statues in the Rotunda of the Library of Congress have an added chance at immortality because personages like Solon in his *himation* and the Droeshout Shakespeare in his doublet and hose, Michelangelo with his angry leather apron and Columbus with his sea-coat and world-map, and Joseph Henry in his gown are freed from the tyranny of modern tailoring. They evade the question; they have every opportunity to look as good as they are. But the statue of a plain blunt modern man rarely looks as good as it is; clothes bewray it; and so we shall find all our modern artists using one subterfuge or another to re-



STATUE OF MAJ. GEN. MACOMB
BY ADOLPH A. WEINMAN

lieve the bleak dulness of modern manly dress seen at full length in the round.

Saint-Gaudens seats his Peter Cooper king-like within a Renaissance portico, and places a curule chair behind his standing Lincoln. Though Lincoln is a greatly revered subject in American sculpture,—a subject of exceedingly rugged force,—few sculptors are satisfied to present Lincoln, plain in his usual garb; they give the hero a background, or a cloak, or an exedra, or a top hat on a bench, so keenly do they feel the lack of amplifying circumstances. Yet certainly Lincoln's bronze clothing offers more of interest than that of today's captains of destiny, soldiers excepted. And how distinctively American is the note sounded in all our portrait statues of Lincoln! Saint-Gaudens, French, MacNeil, Weinman, Barnard, Borglum, and O'Connor have made some of the

THE IDEAL FIGURE

best of these. One sees that a good statue of Lincoln *must* be "distinctively American"; let all "viewers with alarm" be comforted by observing that Frenchification or Italianization slips away from a Lincoln statue like water from a duck's back.

IV

The major heroes of sculpture may well receive the tribute of shrine or exedra or canopy, but what of the more numerous lesser heroes? In avoiding a commonplace rendering, the imaginative sculptor has other avenues of escape beside those offered by the architect, sometimes gloomily called by unbelievers in collaboration the sculptor's evil genius. A first aid is the impressionist manner, used by O'Connor in his Worcester Soldier, and in his masterly statue of General Lawton at Indianapolis. In these works the

modeling is fluid, the planes vibrate in light; we feel the happy absence of a sample-card arrangement of buttons; no one could for a moment say, Here are two more triumphs of bronze tailoring. Already in some of our new War memorials, our sculptors are making use, but not always the best use, of broad simplifications of mass and surface. They are showing us young heroes of the Argonne not cap-a-pie in their uniforms, (no one asks that) but with torn tunics, if any, and with riven flesh. Rodin and the grand old Bourgeois de Calais are indirectly responsible for some of these compositions. But will these bronze pictures of human agony long satisfy the human heart? Have such memorials the permanence of spirit we implore, or are they big bronze studies that are really almost as far from the heroic greatness of the Bourgeois de Calais as from the unpretending littleness of

THE IDEAL FIGURE

a Rogers group, say the Wounded Scout in the Swamp?

The answer depends entirely upon the artist. We have no right to dictate his manner, but we demand that beneath the manner there shall be sound construction as well as feeling: we ask also a knowledge of ensemble, of silhouette. The impressionist style is a fine instrument in the right hands. But in the hands of mediocrity, this style of sculptural language performs the third and most regrettable function of all language, that of concealing the lack of thought. The result is what Mr. Grafly might well call "union-suit sculpture." Between the Devil of a prosaic literalness of rendering, and the deep sea of a sloppy and would-be poetical impressionism, the genius of the sculptor is our only salvation. Impressionism ill-handled will not save from the commonplace either a group or a figure. While the problem of the

portrait statue remains as difficult as it now is, one is glad to see that of late committees are turning toward other ways of perpetuating the memory of greatness. Here in New York, the Pulitzer Memorial in the Plaza has taken the form of a fountain, surmounted by a figure of Abundance, the last work from the hands of Karl Bitter; and the Straus Memorial is a fountain, in which the chief motive is a reclining figure of Contemplation, at the head of a large pool. Other cities also have their successful memorial avoidances of the "iron photograph," as the darkened bronze effigy has been called. A distinguished example is Daniel French's Du Pont fountain in Washington, made to replace a portrait statue. Mrs. Whitney's Titanic Memorial, a memorial for many rather than for one, is admirable in its sincere originality of inspiration.

At least one thing could be done

which is now left undone by most of the City Fathers in our land. Under the direction of Municipal Art Commissions, bronze statues could be cleaned; not polished until they are a glittering congeries of high lights, an effect heartily detested by sculptors, but cleaned reasonably, with a decent regard for the opinions of those who made them. Is it not a singular superstition that a statue once placed should never be touched by the hand of cleanliness, but should suffer in silence whatever indignities the soot and the birds and the climate heap upon it? Again, in a country in which gold is said to be no rare possession, this metal, properly toned, could often without prohibitive expense be used to dignify our statues, and prevent dark oxidization. And this would be done, if we of today cared as much about art as we do, let us say, about advertising. Future civilization will

probably have a place for a new profession, that of the well-trained custodian of statues. The first attempts in this work will not in the nature of things be as destructive as were the labors of the old-time picture-restorer, so-called, a personage long reviled for his ignorant or dishonest acts, but now becoming extinct. And what a boon it would be if this statue-custodian of the future, with a body of intelligent criticism behind him, could be depended upon for judicious removals as well as for faithful guardianship! This liberating thought is brought to the attention of all Municipal Art Commissions.

V

Among appealing portraits in the Louvre is Ghirlandaio's Priest and Boy. Whatever might be hideous in its realism is at once atoned for by something singularly lovely. The

priest has the ugliest nose in the world; Cyrano is a Hermes to him; but the child looks up to him in intimate childlike trust. The most unflinching realism and the tenderest idealism meet in that portrait. And our American portraits in sculpture, taken one by one, run that gamut. From the day of William Rush's rude self-portrait down to the present hour of an occasional polychrome marble bust of exquisite workmanship, our sculpture has advanced in the art of the portrait bust. The creator of the Greek Slave was happier, whether he knew it or not, in rugged masculine portrait heads such as his Jackson and his Calhoun, than in his famed ideal figures; those male likenesses have a living quality that is lacking in his series of idealized busts of classic heroines such as Proserpine and Psyche, all much the same in feature, and all appropriately corseted in a

kind of marble corolla, springing up from a leafy marble base. The ending of a bust, that is to say its base or support, is always a question with the sculptor, unless, like Houdon, he chooses one type of base for all, or unless, as Rodin in his marble portraits of women, he counts upon the richly associative charm of the unachieved.

Since the time of Verocchio's bust of a woman with flowers in her hands, many sculptors, for the sake of added interest, a more vivid characterization, or a more striking composition, have attempted to show the hands as well as the face of the person portrayed. In this difficult undertaking, no modern sculptor has succeeded better than Mr. Niehaus, well-known for his imposing monuments. His portrait bust of John Quincy Adams Ward is not only a work of distinguished realism, worthy of the artist it represents; it is also a

perfect solution of an almost insolvable problem in arrangement.

Among the greatest virile portraits of our age are those of the "all around" American sculptor, Charles Grafly; for style and workmanship and seizing of character any half-dozen of his busts would proudly hold their own if placed beside Rodin's male portraits in the Metropolitan Museum. Furthermore, they have the old-fashioned advantage of looking like the persons they represent, an advantage not always attained in the Rodin portrayals. Perhaps a fairer tribute to Mr. Grafly's power would be to say that his busts need not fear comparison with the Saint-Gaudens Sherman, that most spirited portrait of a war-chief. One of our memorable sculptured portraits is Mrs. Burroughs's bust of John La Farge, modeled at about the period of Mr. Lockwood's painted portrait. Both artists have attained truth. Mr.



PORTRAIT BUST OF J. Q. A. WARD
BY CHARLES H. NIEHAUS

Lockwood's broadly enveloping technique shows La Farge as the cosmopolitan, the artist who is also the gracious citizen of the world; Mrs. Burroughs's point of view emphasizes La Farge the individualist, the thinker habitually pursuing his own spiritual adventures in many realms, oriental and occidental. The painting tells wherein La Farge resembles his fellow-men, while the sculpture with equal force brings out his valuable points of difference. Twenty years ago, Jonathan Scott Hartley's sturdy renderings of masculine character delighted his colleagues; and even today, his bust of John Gilbert as Sir Peter Teazle loses nothing of its rich whimsical earnestness when considered beside modern work of the highest order, such as Robert Aitken's portrait of Augustus Thomas, or one of Fraser's presentments of our great American citizens.

THE IDEAL FIGURE

Naturally remote in intent and result from these virile modelings are the lovingly rendered portraits of women and children familiar in our sculpture. A well-known example is Manship's realistically carved marble image of his baby daughter placed within a captivating shrine of blue and gold. Portraits in the round, carried out in a polychrome ensemble of beautifully cut marble combined with other materials, such as wood, gold, and semi-precious stones, offer a fascinating field for the American sculptor willing to devote to such experiments the time and thought they demand. The pure white marble bust looks ill at ease in the warm precincts of the modern home; it is a thing of the past. We can but wonder that our elders bore it so long, even when it was in a measure suppressed by placing it looking street-ward, between the parted lace curtains.

For the male portrait, modern taste



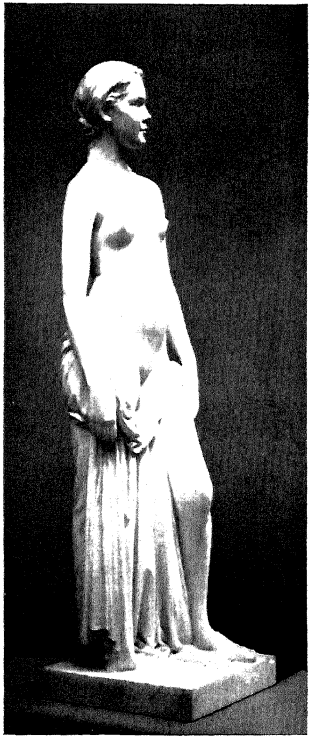
MARBLE PORTRAIT OF BABY
BY PAUL MANSHIP

generally prefers bronze to marble; and just as the dead whiteness of marble may be relieved by color, so the severe darkness of bronze in statue or bust may be altered by the use of a harmonious patina. Many of our sculptors have given long and patient study to this subject of "patine"; others again trust all to the bronze founder. But sculpture still has much to learn from chemistry; and there are still a few artists who keep enough of the weaker side of craftsmanship to believe in the advisability of secret processes. Is is not true that art is the last field where such secrecies should exist? Do we not look upon art as the liberator of great things, not as the locker-up of little things like craftsmen's receipts? For receipts that are not exposed to the air get mouldy with hugger-mugger and abracadabra; this is as true today as in good Cennino Cennini's time of "mordant with gar-

lic," and "tempera with the yolk of the egg of a city hen."

VI

A survey of the spirit of American sculpture should include, as a cause for joy, a glimpse at the single ideal figures in which many of our modern sculptors express themselves, more or less untrammeled by the demands of the world. The subjects for such figures are rarely new, yet they must be treated with perennial freshness. Take Diana: Saint-Gaudens, Warner, MacMonnies, Miss Scudder, McCartan and I know not how many others have done Diana in her phases, and each new portrayal should prove a new joy. Take Maidenhood: Rudolph Evans has chosen this ancient theme for his Golden Hour, one of the most delightful pieces in all American sculpture; Barnard has rendered it in



THE GOLDEN HOUR
BY RUDOLPH EVANS

marble; Sherry Fry's classic bronze Maidenhood, in the guise of Hygeia, and Mrs. Burroughs's On the Threshold are sculptural expressions of the same subject. Take the Ephebos: John Donoghue's Young Sophocles, dated 1885, a masterpiece coming just half way, in point of time, between the arrival of the Greek Slave in America and the unveiling of MacMonnies's Civic Virtue, is a gloriously conceived figure of youth in the abstract, rather than a full-length likeness of the Greek poet leading the chorus after Salamis. Surely in sculptural mastery, Donoghue is much nearer to MacMonnies than to Powers. Picking our way past the Slave and her kin, and coming at last upon a classic like this Young Sophocles, we may safely abandon the prefix *pseudo*. What a relief! It is as if one could at last leave off overshoes, and walk abroad dry-shod, in fair weather. This example from the

'eighties points out once more the progress made between the Fairs of 1876 and 1893. Does it also, in its old-school seriousness of consecration to art, and in its reverence for "the nobler forms of nature" shame a little the easy slapdash of the battalions of sketchy figures now clamoring for space in print and in the galleries? Probably not. Other times, other ideals. "She certainly saved herself trouble," was the comment of a sculptor, looking at a modernist figure whose drapery was made by strings.

V THE STATUE AND THE BUST

CHAPTER VI

OUR EQUESTRIAN STATUES

OUR forefathers' first fond national desire in sculpture was for an equestrian statue of Washington, by Houdon; a wish never to be fulfilled. The Congressional impulse of 1783 was sobered on counting up the cost. It came to nothing until two generations had passed; and it came to very little even then. Today, our country is sometimes called the paradise of the equestrian statue. If any such paradise exists among us, it has been created since 1853, when Clark Mills, "never having seen General Jackson or an equestrian statue," at last succeeded, after heart-breaking difficulties, in casting in bronze the first

equestrian statue ever made here. With what passionate dithyrambs Benvenuto Cellini would have told the world of such a feat, had it been his! How breathlessly he would have described the breaking of cranes and the bursting of furnaces and the six tragic failures in the body of the horse before the old cannon captured by Andrew Jackson were finally translated into the supposed immortality of the equestrian group in bronze! General Jackson and his horse are still balancing themselves at leisure in front of the White House; it is perhaps needless to report their aspect as a thing more strange than beautiful. No one thinks this work a triumph of art, but every serious student knows it as a much needed initial victory over the hard conditions of bronze casting. You may call the group bizarre and unsophisticated in effect, as well as wholly mechanistic by first

intention; but you cannot take from it the honor of being first in our long procession of equestrian statues, some of them forms of the very highest distinction. And you will not fail to observe the amazing improvement in style that has somehow taken place by the time our second equestrian appears; Brown's Washington, though coming but three years after the Mills Jackson, remains among our fine examples in sculpture. Not so number three, the Mills Washington, belated and inadequate response to the Congressional resolve in 1783; least said, soonest mended. Better fortune came with number four, the Ball Washington, long the pride of Boston.

II

Today, our equestrian statues are the work of accomplished sculptors. Such commissions are not bestowed on

weaklings or beginners, on irresponsibles or mere experimenters. In addition to genius, the highest equestrian art demands of the sculptor certain pedestrian virtues; such as foresight and perseverance and common sense and ability to cope with the unsuspected deviltries of men, beasts, and things. As said in another chapter, every sculptor who triumphs over his equestrian problem is heroic. This is trüe whether he works single-handed or in collaboration with some other sculptor, some one with a special gift for animal form. And it remains true, even though in our day, no sculptor can well hope or desire, like Houdon, to be "considered under the double aspect of Statuary and Founder." Earnest men like Cellini and Houdon, Clark Mills and Brown have long sincé, by working on their knees in sweat and grime, paved the way for the modern organization of bronze founding to be

carried on as a craft in purlieus outside the sculptor's studio. Many tribulations are thereby removed from the sculptor, but enough have been added for his proper chastening. Those who know our American equestrian statues, those who have seen the pluck and energy with which their makers have achieved their goal, will certainly set down valor as one of the gifts belonging to the spirit of American sculpture.

III

Clark Mills, Brown, Ball, Ward, Saint-Gaudens, French, Potter, Partridge, Remington, Bush-Brown, Elwell, Proctor, Rhind, Lukeman, Bitter, Niehaus, Ruckstull, Bartlett, MacMonnies, Dallin, the two Borglums, Fraser, Aitken, Miss Hyatt, Mrs. Farnham, Roth, Packer, Shrady;—if without benefit of catalogue memory at once speaks all these names, no

doubt there are others also. And in what infinite variety of imagination and of rendering their works stand before us! The whole procession of mounted heroes produces no sense of monotony. Originality, that quality overprized when prized at all as an end in itself, appears in sufficient measure. Yet, beginning with Saint-Gaudens, most of these well-trained artists would undoubtedly admit their debt of gratitude to Barye and Frémiet and Dubois, the French masters, and beyond these, to Donatello and to Verocchio and Leopardi, through whom the Renaissance gave to the world those two vivid masterpieces, the Gattamelata and the Colleoni. If that almost mythical third masterpiece, da Vinci's Sforza, had been saved to round out a trinity of high accomplishment, how great would have been our debt to Italy! As it is, the void left is something every sculptor is free to

fill, if his powers permit; there are still worlds to conquer.

IV

A strangely moving story of some such high ambition is told in the career of Henry Merwin Shrady, who died last year, at the very time when his colossal equestrian monument to General Grant was unveiled in Washington. Shrady's swift uncharted course, like that of a few artists, variations from the type, conformed in no way to the routine deemed necessary for most men in his profession. A graduate from Columbia, he had successfully engaged in business for some years before he began to model animals. He became a sculptor overnight. His immediate success in the art of sculpture is but partly explained by referring to his cultivated intellect, and by saying that as the son of a noted sur-

geon he easily assimilated the truths of anatomy. Nor does his success need explanation as much as recognition. His success is his artist's secret, perhaps never to be revealed, perhaps always to remain among the imponderable things the soul will not disclose to science. Surely he crowded into his brief career all the rapt effort of the youthful student, and all the more composed but no less strenuous endeavor of the assured artist. From first to last, his offerings are good. But the grandiose conception of his final work, the Grant monument, an epic crowded and massed with equestrian and leonine figures passionately portrayed in a kind of exalted realism, called for continued heroic years of labor. Those years were at times harassed by misunderstandings with the changing officials whose presumably difficult duty it was to supervise the work in the public interest. Indeed,

Shrady's equestrian concept was in this instance a thing too grandiose to be accepted, on sight unseen, by pedestrian minds. Though his art triumphed at last, and all his promises were performed, his life ended as the veil was lifted from its crowning work.

V

I often think that the equestrian statue has a larger and more immediate power of communication than other sculptural forms. This is not merely because of its weight and volume and general air of expensiveness. Those things belong in ever so many climes to ever so many huge prosaic monuments seen with the profoundest indifference of the human soul. But the man (or the Maid) on horseback is readily enough taken to heart as a person with tidings, say as someone bringing the good news from Ghent,

or some other definite place. He or she at once becomes a figure in a *drama,* that old word that means *something doing;* an atmosphere of romance is at once created for the passer-by to share in, if he likes.

Perhaps the equestrian hero is Mr. Lukeman's Circuit Rider, a preacher of the Word, going very reverently and wisely about his Father's business, or else, this being a great year for bronze circuit riding, he is Mr. Proctor's studious Circuit Rider, to be set up on the Capitol grounds at Salem, Oregon. Perhaps he is Mr. Bartlett's Lafayette, coming from a court of distinction, with a message of high national import, so that all the glory of just that must be diplomatically suggested in a large way in his own person, while his horse must show a proud lip, and seem to be of the kind men give kingdoms for. Perhaps he is Ward's General Thomas, sitting his

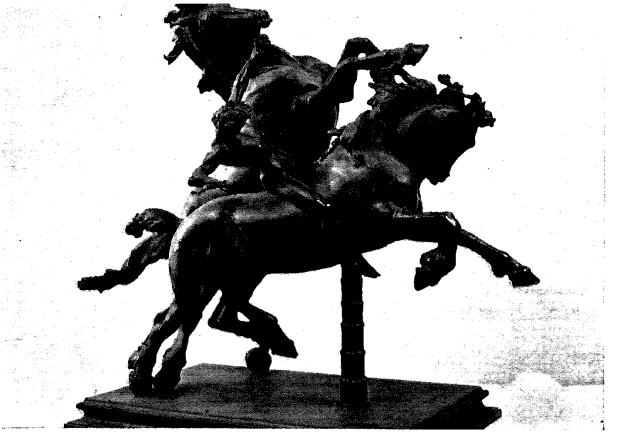
thoroughbred, the first thoroughbred revealed in true mettle in our sculpture; the General surveys a momentous battlefield, "holding his own," as Garfield amazedly saw, "with utter defeat on each side of him, and such wild disorder in his rear," and so winning the name he bore the rest of his life, the Rock of Chickamauga. Or perhaps again the hero is a heroine,—the Maid of Orleans as Miss Hyatt has portrayed her, uplifted by her visions and riding on to glory.

In any event, it is quite clear that the equestrian statue is a storied thing. And this is very hard on the solemn critic, who, thirsting for pure abstractions, declares in his mistaken way that art must *not* tell a story, and who for the moment highbrowbeats everybody into saying message or meaning or content instead of story. Meanwhile, so far apart are the ways of criticism and creation, the maker of

equestrian statues continues to spin his romances and epics in bronze. The fact that his fine theme appeals to the people not only gladdens him; it puts him under a still more pressing obligation to show what an artist can do with such a theme, how greatly he can enhance and exalt it. He understands well enough that it is easier to begin such enterprises with gusto than to finish them with glory. Most of our masters of the equestrian form were lovers and knowers of the horse before they were his sculptors; and that, though not imperative for genius, is valuable.

VI

Aside from good workmanship, our American equestrians show an individuality of conception, now stately, now familiarly historic, now soberly truthful, and almost always interesting. No one but MacMonnies has just the Mac-



HORSE TAMERS
BY F. W. MACMONNIES

Monnies Gaelic, Gallic gallantry of attack, everywhere sustained by the MacMonnies absolute mastery of sculptural resource; no one but Bartlett can impart quite that cosmopolitan touch of suavity and courtliness which tempers the eagerness of his young Lafayette; no one but Bitter ever worked up such a shout and hurrah over rearing stallions for expositions, and yet was able, a little later, to give New York a work of such studied seriousness as his equestrian of General Sigel; and no one but Edward Potter has ever told in sculpture, during a life-time of acquaintance with thunder-clothed necks, so much of the honest truth about horses. That clear atmosphere of practical Christianity which envelops those two Circuit Riders does not in the least resemble the religious ecstasy breathing from Miss Hyatt's Jeanne d'Arc. Different again is the exalted devotion that

speaks in every line of Saint-Gaudens's Shaw, from the slant of the rifles, like falling rain, up to the brooding visage of the young commander and the presence that guides him and his men. Looking at the mere composition here, one thinks often of the Surrender at Breda; but the oblique lines of our Army rifles are surely far more tragic than the upright Breda lances. Each of these last-named sculptors has had a certain theme and a certain emotion to present, and each has marshalled his resources in his own characteristic way.

Again, the tragedy that will always be latent for the Southerner in the Saint-Gaudens Sherman, with its dominating figure of the warrior seasoned to his great task, yet a task to be tempered by the advancing spirit of Nike-Eirene, is not in the least like the kind of tragedy that enfolds Fraser's End of the Trail. Here the pupil does not follow the master in subject, or in

treatment, or in those mere motions of the sculptor's tool, too often transmitted unchanged from teacher to learner. Mr. Fraser's moving parable of a losing people is told in his own way, and in the grand style of sculpture, just as the parables of the Evangelists are told in each Evangelist's way, and in the grand style of language, as English-speaking readers are privileged to know it. Long before assisting Saint-Gaudens in the Sherman equestrian, Mr. Fraser, from his boyhood in Montana, knew the horse of the untamed West. His group is sculpture from his own experience. And Solon Borglum's way with his far-Western themes is not at all like Mr. Fraser's way. Solon Borglum, least academic of all those sculptors who still feel reverence for anatomical truths, envelops his men and beasts in a kind of fateful weather that stirs the human heart to sympathy with them

in their struggles, whether happy or unhappy; he veils his subjects in the hope of making them more clear to you. Different again is Mr. Dallin's version of that great historic theme, the mounted Indian. This sculptor's genius, seen at its best in the commanding Appeal to the Great Spirit, placed in front of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, interprets the ritual of a passing race. The position of this austere group at the approach to an austere building appropriately suggests to the spectator the pathos of contrast between two cultures, the lower and the higher, the vanishing and the enduring. Does not that Indian mutely remind us of great treasure which is ours, but in which he may not share?

VII

Whether our equestrian statues, as the groups last spoken of, reveal a

side of American life destined to pass from our view, or whether, on the other hand, they are of the historic portrait order, as are our most of the Old World equestrians, it is clear that the personal vision prevails. The note of romance is present; perhaps we scarcely realize how much the so-called dumb beast contributes to that. Mr. Proctor's mastery of animal form, whether in equine or other shape, is certain, plain, delightful. Leaving our horses for a moment, where shall we find a "Tyger" as terrible and as "burning bright" as the Proctor Golden Tiger for Princeton, a creature none the less awe-inspiring though seen in sphinx-like repose? Decidedly, the man has the gift for animals; I shall never forget how under Mr. Proctor's playful influence, one of the dullest and mangiest kittens I ever saw suddenly leaped up into a miracle of feline grace.

STATUES

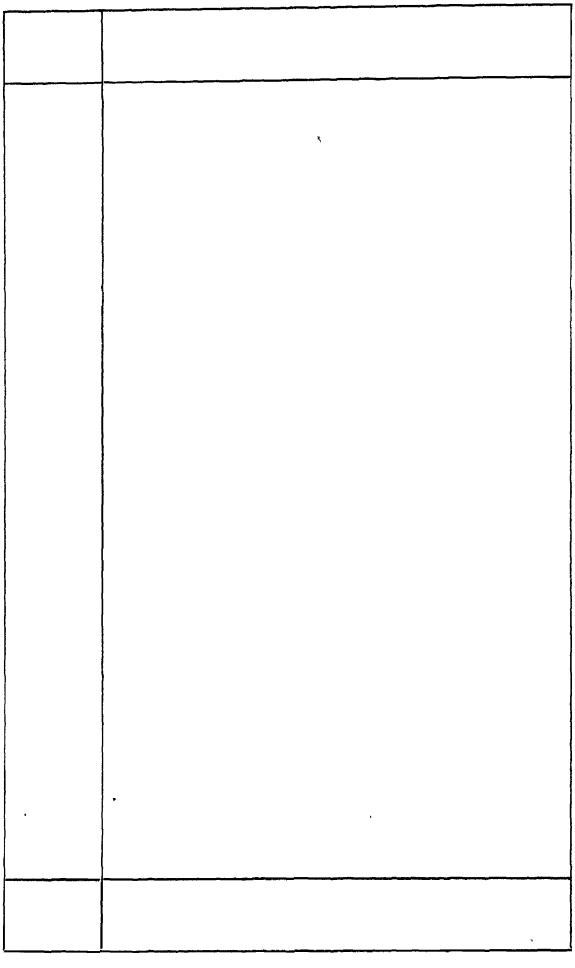
A genius for animals is found rather often among us, as befits a people whose fathers so lately subdued the forest-born; it is a gift as richly special and as deeply innate as the gift, let us say, for religious sculpture, or for any other lofty form. Through this gift, Miss Hyatt and Miss Gardin, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Roth, Mr. Potter, Mr. Laessle, Mr. Sanford, Mr. Rumsey and many others have shown us beautiful or terrible or humorous things. The presence of the horse, the *cheval,* easily gives the authentic accent of *chivalry* to the equestrian portrait statue, as contrasted with its pedestrian relative; while in a work imagined in the manner of the Saint-Gaudens Sherman, the beast, the man, and the embodied spirit unite in an epical ensemble that appeals to the thoughtful mind. One thinks of that similar trinity of Earth, Man, and Heaven, said to animate in humbler guise every



EQUESTRIAN STATUE OF GENERAL SHERMAN
BY AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

flower arrangement poetically shaped by Japanese fingers. An artistic impulse so widely felt, though not yet commonly revealed, holds out its promise for future creations in art. At present, the fact that Reinhold Begas in Germany and Augustus Saint-Gaudens in America have lately used this motive in equestrian art is perhaps unduly prohibitive for other sculptors. True, neither artist knew what the other was doing; Saint-Gaudens was somewhat taken aback on learning of the Begas design.

STATUES



CHAPTER VII

THE ART OF RELIEF, HIGH AND LOW

I

How summarize an art that shows us sculptured form, not in the faithful four-square roundness of fact, but in a subtly chosen and poetic projection of fact? For the manifestations of the spirit of relief are legion. A relief of a certain figure may have scarcely the thickness of a flower petal, or again it may have an even greater salience than life itself. All depends upon its purpose. When I am told that Mr. Aitken and Mr. MacNeil are making some studies in relief, I do not know whether Mr. Aitken is at work on another large equestrian subject like that of his George Rogers Clark monu-

ment, or whether he is devising one of his little medallic Pegasi such as his Watrous medal; and I do not know whether Mr. MacNeil is to give us a new coin, such as his quarter-dollar of a recent series, or a new memorial as imposing as his military monument at Albany with its serried stone warriors in relief. Surely it is a Protean art that can produce the Brenner cent, the Weinman dime, the Fraser Victory medal; that can make the Saint-Gaudens portrait of Stevenson a suitable adornment for the church of St. Giles in Edinburgh; that can decorate the façade of St. Bartholomew's in New York with bronze portals crowded with figures of the apostles and crowned with marble tympana of the saints; that may even serve the dynamic purpose of Rude's great Chant du Départ on the Paris arch and the static majesty of Calder's Washington and MacNeil's Washing-

ton paired on the New York arch.

When we remember all the little coins and medals in the world, and all the architectural ornament, structural or otherwise, on the buildings of the world, and all the religious reliefs of Bible story such as those that Mino and the Della Robbias have left us, and all the patriotic and allegoric tales hoisted aloft into pediments and springing up on arches, it is clear that relief sculptures vastly outnumber the other sort. How often sculptors must have hailed relief as an escape from rendering facts in the round, to be seen all around! For commemorative portraiture in the public square, the future will probably make a wider use of high relief (or even of low relief, properly framed) to take the place of the portrait statue, often the result of a purely automatic choice. And the purely automatic choice is not a choice at all; it is a habit.

HIGH AND LOW

II

I am told on high authority that there are many persons who think that a bas-relief in sculpture is a form resulting from an exactly proportioned flattening of the same subject in the round. It is also dismaying to find that there are those who would invent a machine whereby on some principle of proportionate recession from the eye a bas-relief could be produced from a form in full-blown dimensions. Is not the art of sculpture already sufficiently mechanized? And surely a good look at a fine relief should dispel mechanistic illusions. For in relief, if nowhere else, live sculpture laughs at the despotism of mathematics. Even the tyro in relief portraiture soon finds that he cannot give the human ear the projection from background that a proportional representation would demand; he sees that to do



WELCH MONUMENT
BY HERBERT ADAMS

this would exalt that whimsical volute beyond its merits, and divert attention from other and perhaps more delightful, more characteristic features of a face. If his portrait is in profile, as is not unlikely, he discovers that this profile is in itself a very telling thing, and that he can make it interesting or lively by softening a contour here, by hardening it there, by letting it alone somewhere else, by sinking or by raising parts of his background; before long he has discovered, as Egyptians and Italians and Frenchmen and Americans before him have discovered, a thousand devices of art, not algebra, that give his relief a look of life and truth. In short, his work will never seem so false and so far from sympathetic as when its chief quality is that it is topographically true in its proportionate flattening. Of course I feel ashamed to say such things baldly, when so many of our American

bas-reliefs have said them poetically. My excuse is that my words may drive some unbeliever to look at the works. For, as the Metropolitan Museum's curator of prints lately said in an address, "Art in this country doesn't need to be talked about; it needs to be *seen.*"

III

Someone promptly asks what are the rules of relief. But are rules of much use here? Rules of relief are seldom mentioned by the sculptor; never until after they have been patently transgressed. He has of course his standards; he allows to his reliefs some of the privileges of painting, such as perspective and distance, but he does not presume too far with these borrowings, lest his work lose its sculptural style. A relief is largely a matter of innate artistic feeling, as well as of trained taste. And quite as much as a

work in the round, it tells the personality of its maker. A Saint-Gaudens relief, whether the monumental bronze Shaw, or the marble portrait, slightly under life-size, of Mrs. Stanford White, or the little reduction, "about as large as the hand of a child of twelve years," made from the bas-relief of the baby Homer, reveals the artist's temperament, shows his principles and prejudices in art.

Many of this master's pupils have made memorable reliefs in various styles from medallic to monumental. The medals and portrait-reliefs of Martiny, Flanagan, Fraser, and Weinman are well-known. Less familiar to the general public because kept in private collections are the admirable bronze or marble portrait-reliefs by Frances Grimes. After the mechanical roughing-out of the pointing-machine is over, Miss Grimes herself finishes all her marbles, whether created in the

round or in relief. She does this oftener in her studio than in the Sunday picture papers; and because her designs for marble are from their first rude beginnings in the clay imagined with a full realization of their final possibilities in marble, they naturally have an integrity not always attained in the work of sculptors unfamiliar with the chisel.

IV

Most artists would probably agree with Saint-Gaudens that "the great coins are the Greek, . . . just as the great medals are those of the fifteenth century by Pisanello and Sperandio."

But he who designs the modern American coin, however enthusiastic he may be in his admiration of the Greek high relief masterpieces of monetary beauty, must take serious



VICTORY MEDAL
BY JAMES EARL FRASER

and constant thought of the curiously un-Greek conditions confronting him. His coin must work harder than the Greek coin; it must "stack" properly; it must be struck in numbers undreamed of in Hellas. Our difficult modern ideal calls alike for quantity and for quality. Comparatively limited as was the circulation of our recent Victory medal, four million copies were considered necessary. One of the good precedents introduced by Roosevelt, in consultation with Saint-Gaudens, was that of entrusting the designing of our coins to our most talented sculptors; the resulting improvement in our coinage, on the æsthetic side, has been one of our twentieth-century triumphs. And the "great medals" Saint-Gaudens loved are still influencing the medallic art of the Western world.

The candor and warm simplicity of Pisanello and Sperandio were perhaps lost sight of during those years while

the earlier French master-medalists of the nineteenth century, David d'Angers, Oudiné, and Ponscarme, were paving the difficult way for a later and more sympathetic flowering of the medallic art in the hands of Roty, Chaplain, and Charpentier. But the delightful quality of the Renaissance medal was never more deeply appreciated in France than at the time when a goodly number of our American sculptors were studying there, and shared in that appreciation; and now that the modern reducing-machine allows the artist fully to develop his design for a medal in a fairly large size before bringing it within the final small circumference, it is certainly well for him to bear in mind the admirable results obtained by the less sophisticated quattrocento methods. Never before has the medalist had at hand as many excellent mechanical aids as at present. Never before has he faced a greater

need of remembering the value of clarity in his vision, of simplicity and sincerity in his touch.

Some of our purists maintain that every medal should be modeled from first to last in its ultimate size, however trying and meticulous this task may be. But does not such strictness denote a rather rabid hostility to mechanical contrivances? There are medals whose intricate yet logical design could hardly be carried out by the human hand, no matter how skilful, within the narrow limits thus prescribed. Of this type is the plaquette designed by Saint-Gaudens as a token of gratitude to all who took part in the Masque of the Golden Bowl, offered to him on a famous anniversary.

"Within its harmonious oblong are shown the columns and the blazing altar and the Greek seat that figured in the scene, framed by the proscenium arch of great New England pines, and

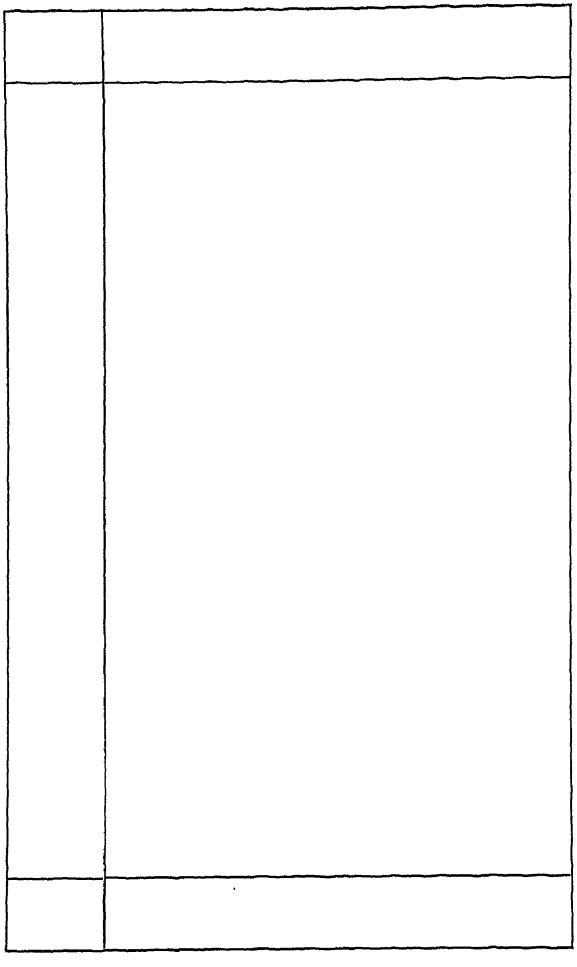
by the stage-curtains crowned with masks invented by the joyous fancy of Maxfield Parrish; below is the triumphal chariot; and, as a symbol of the love that prompted the pageant, there stands by the altar the winged figure of Amor, who has borrowed the lyre of Apollo. The names of the seventy figurants are beautifully inscribed, making a decoration for certain spaces in the background; this feature, naturally prized by those who received the medal, was made possible by modeling the original on a large scale. Here is no hodge-podge of unrelated symbols, but a beautiful and lovingly considered arrangement of deeply significant things. We associate with it the same sculptor's Columbus medal-obverse, and many reductions, in plaquette form, from his portrait reliefs. While delighting in the conceptions of antiquity and of the Renaissance, Saint-Gaudens, more than any other master



PLAQUETTE
BY AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS

of his day, made a faithful study of all the conditions of the modern portrait relief."

The fact that this sculptor not only prized the bas-relief form, but also achieved a beautiful originality in it has of course turned many Americans to the same path of expression. It is one of the delightful ways in which modeling can take an occasional half-holiday from the facts of form.



CHAPTER VIII

OF GARDEN SCULPTURE AND ORNAMENT*

I

VISITORS were standing by the fountain in the garden of a sculptor; and some one was asking him what in his opinion was the most beautiful material to model in. The questioner probably had in mind clay, wax, stone, metal and other solid substances; but the sculptor answered quickly: "Water. There is nothing in the whole world so marvelous to manipulate as water." A gleam of creative rapture lit his face. "Shall I show you my 'Veil of

*This chapter is largely a reprint, permitted through the courtesy of the *American Magazine of Art.*

Mist?' or would you rather see my 'Jeweled Elm-Tree?' "

There are few sculptors who have not been fascinated at one time or another by the designing of fountains, with their primary interest of sculpture and their secondary mystery and magic of water; whether of still water, with its mirrored pictures of blue sky, dark trees, many-colored flowers and sun-flecked walls; or of gently dropping water, suggestive of leisure and repose; or of leaping, flashing, dancing water, hypnotic even without copper or silver balls tossed up and down; or of water brought from afar in grandiose cascades or canals, as in the garden art of the Villa d'Este, the Villa Lante, Versailles, and Saint Cloud; or even of water turned at great cost to wondrous baroque inventions for drenching the unwary bystander, as in the Villa Aldobrandini. Fortunately, at the present hour, the

practical joke in fountains is out of date; and there is a growing use of fountains as memorials, either stately or intimate, either in public squares or in private gardens.

Setting aside the innumerable pots, urns, sarcophagi and other "containers" for trees, shrubs and flowering plants, the larger part of our garden sculpture centres about water and its works. Besides the more or less imposing figure fountain, with its bronze boys, dolphins, fauns, nymphs, Nereids, Tritons, turtles and other hardy perennials of the aquatic imagination, there are tanks, reservoirs, bathing pools, all no less practical if touched with some suggestion of the sculptor's art; there is the basin of the well-known *pozzo* type, flowering out into *putti,* corpulent or lean, bending under their swags of foliage and fruit; there is the little wall-fountain, borrowed from the lavabo of Renaissance

churches, and dear to the careful gardener, replenishing from it the green-painted, fine-snouted watering-pot kept sacred to his tiny seedlings. Then there is the water-spout, ready with its witty word of grotesque, and the rain-water pipe-head, in which English lead-work of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries displayed a vigorous and interesting art. There is even the bird-bath, that modern invention of the nature-lover, since today, though we profit by many of the garden ideas of the Renaissance, we do not imitate those Siennese gallants who tied blinded thrushes to the dwarf ilex and cypress, to decoy winged creatures for convenient garden shooting. The twentieth-century bird-bath lures birds to life rather than to death, as is shown in a decorative bronze by Annette Saint-Gaudens, who has represented upon it characters in Percy MacKaye's bird-masque, Sanctuary. The mas-



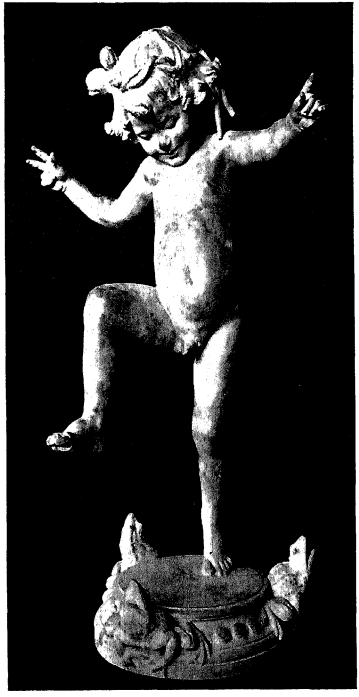
BACCHANTE
BY F. W. MACMONNIES

quing spirit is afoot these days with new opportunities for sculpture; the outdoor stage, now no very uncommon feature in private gardens and groves, shows a retaining wall and other boundaries ready for suitable sculptural accent by means of statues, Hermæ, vases, mascarons or garlands.

As not every day is fit for verse, so not every artist is gifted with the happy hand for designing garden forms. It is a temperamental matter; generally the note should be that of joy, or at least of serenity. Mr. MacMonnies's Bacchante and his Boy with Heron long ago set the perfect pace of gayety for American gardens. And today, what gladder creature this side of Arcady can you find than the MacMonnies Duck Baby? Unless it is Edith Barretto Parsons's laughing Child with Turtle, or else one of Miss Scudder's engaging imps of Frogland. Some of our most accomplished sculp-

tors have delighted us with their garden art. How exquisite is the graciousness of John Gregory's kneeling Philomela, a statue lately designed for the bird-garden of Mrs. Payne Whitney! No figure in recent years has seemed more original and alluring than this "blithe spirit" considering the wonder of her pinions.

The garden sculptor should have above all a true dramatic instinct for the rôle his work is to play in the garden ensemble—a fine relation-sense which will by no means clip the wings of his design. You can not make pleasure-sculpture out of accurate letter-of-the-law nature-copying alone. In a fountain figure, for example, with its silhouette seen under varying conditions, today drenched with sun and tomorrow dripping with water, all according to wind and weather, surely the artist has much to consider aside from inch-by-inch anatomical model-



FOUNTAIN FIGURE
BY JANET SCUDDER

ing. Sculptors know this, but sometimes forget it, when once launched out on the simple joy of "copying a *morceau*."

Here we touch a great difficulty in our art education. In spite of all the chattered tomfoolishness of the hour, the fact remains that for most artists, the school training is the beginning of wisdom. It is not a goal, but a starting-point; it gives firm ground for future creative flights. Yet no house can be well built of foundation-stuff alone. The school provides a foundation, and something of a ground-floor besides, but the artist himself must build his own upper stories. He must create his own personal syntheses in art, with the help of the repeated analyses practised by him in school. And now comes his perilous moment; to survive, he needs time and opportunity. The most advanced type of artistic training, that offered by our

American Academy in Rome, does not begin and end with Houdon's *"Copiez toujours,"* but allows for contemplation, for self-communion, for the personal synthesis, and for the exchange of thought between sculptor, painter and architect, so that each may understand the other's aims. American art today needs all the mellowing and broadening influences that both the contemplative and the communicative spirit can bestow. Mr. Manship's figures and groups, with their rich inventions of rainbow-winged fancy, are here to prove that the Academy is not an ogre, whose chief delight is to crush personal genius. But human frailty does not easily part with its incurably romantic ideas of a fabulous monster; the public demands a scape-goat; it would rather than not believe in the Evil Eye; and the mood of the moment, with the injudicious, is to charge all untoward influences in art to some

Gryphon of an Academy, of which little is known, and everything suspected.

II

Meanwhile, Mr. Manship from Rome and Mr. McCartan in New York have both proved in their work that they not only know how to model the nude and compose a statue, but, what is far more rare, that they can "handle ornament." Now ornament is often regarded as beneath the notice of the new-fledged sculptor, while as a matter of sad fact, it is more likely to be quite beyond his powers; and this is partly because he lacks invention, and partly because he is without knowledge of the rhythms of design; not hearing the music, his mind cannot march. Garden sculpture as well as severe monumental form calls constantly for the light touch or the strong arm of ornament. Noting our Ameri-

can lack in this direction, the Society of Beaux Arts Architects, in coöperation with the National Sculpture Society, has been at pains to install in New York ateliers in which the ornament-modeler, as distinct from the sculptor, may seriously study his art. And when an artist like Mr. McCartan designs and models the exquisite ornament seen upon his Barnett Prize Fountain, a new hope is breathed into the efforts of those who would improve our American standards in artistic craftsmanship, and break down the stupid barrier between artist and artisan. Somewhere in the unknown lies a vast continent of design-forms not yet touched by any Columbus—a wealth of fauna and flora not of the Acropolis or the Roman Forum or the Gothic cathedral, but akin to Greek and Gothic in beauty and power; and the world is waiting for these new good things.

VIII OF GARDEN SCULPTURE

III

Given our garden fountain, with or without its ornament, what more natural than a coign of vantage from which to enjoy it? The exedra, as introduced to us long ago by McKim, White and other architects, has been eagerly adopted by garden lovers. A beloved spot at Aspet, the Saint-Gaudens estate, holds in the far distance a blue sky, a blue mountain and a lordly crest of purple pines; in the middle distance is a magic stretch of simple grass, while near at hand, and flanked by a rosy tracery of oleander blossoms, a golden god Pan pipes to the seven golden fishes spouting water into a green-veined white marble basin, rectangular in form. Facing this, and shaded by pines, hemlocks and silver birches, is a great white exedra, planned not on the usual curve but on the three sides of an oblong, and show-

ing in relief, on the end of each wing, an ivy-crowned faun, by Louis Saint-Gaudens. Two giant terra-cotta vases, made in this country from Italian originals, stand at the entrance to the pergola that garlands the "old studio"; in an upper garden, a bronze Narcissus leads the eye toward the house, with its white balustrade accented by gracious heads of the Seasons.

Some years ago, I saw in the garden of a sculptor an exedra with outlines pleasing to the eye, and comfortable to the anatomy. The material was concrete, that first aid to the garden-mad and their domestic sculpture. Inquiry brought out the fact that the contour had been established by the sculptor's actual sitting down, *in propria persona,* in a roughly shaped mass of fresh concrete. To use the human frame as a heroic modeling-tool, or templet, struck me at that time as a delightfully unique idea in sculp-

ture; today, with so many artists keen for the queer, it would doubtless seem a mere commonplace; one might even be glad that the human templet was not used upside down, in the pursuit of novelty. But to speak justly, our garden sculpture has not succumbed to the idea that queerness is higher than beauty, and a shock to the spectator a richer artistic achievement than his delight. Garden art in our country is no longer in its infancy, and not yet in its decadence. Accepting the broad principles of Italian garden design, (such as the treatment of the garden as a place to live in, the harmonizing of the house with the garden, and the adaptation of both to climate and landscape) it does not today admit the baroque puerilities of the hydraulic practical joke, or the grotto of mechanical toys and monsters. Fortunately, much of our landscape gardening is in the hands of true artists, who employ

the best resources of other days, and the genius of modern sculptors.

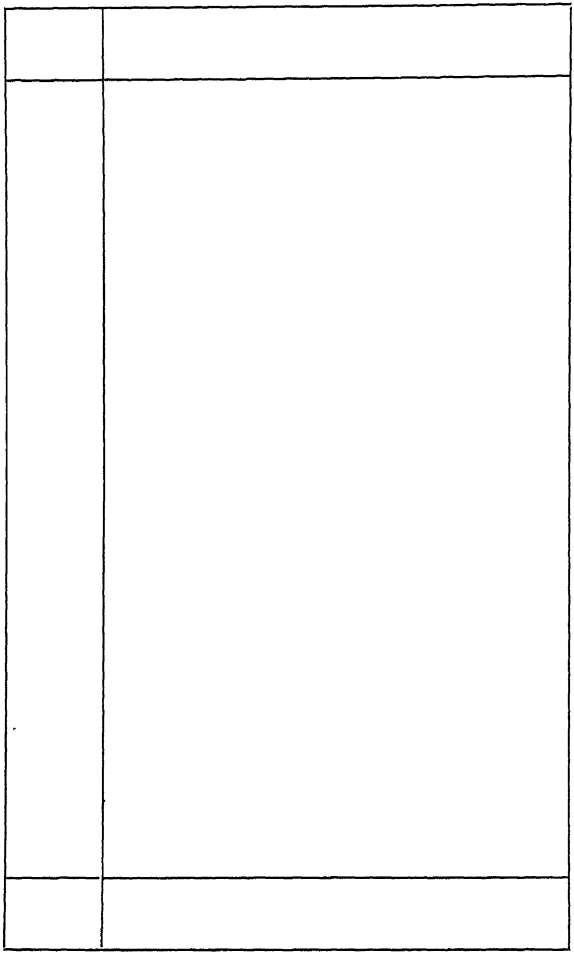
Among the oldest inhabitants of gardens are the Hermæ, or boundary gods, once used, it is said, to define limits of land, but now freed from that dull task, to be set up (singly, or in pairs, or in rows) wherever found desirable, as to accent a terrace, or to flank a flight of steps. The variety of type is infinite; male and female, these terminal deities are the chorus in the grand opera of garden sculpture, the only rule laid upon them being that they must play the foursquare post below the waist, and look pleasant above. Marble is their best dress, but they may with good effect wear terra-cotta in the paler tones; a material well adapted also for the legion of great decorative pots, round or square, that "help so" in gardens either intimate or imposing. Many garden owners collect "antiques," delightful enough even

though some of them, like women and music, are perhaps better left undated. Renaissance sarcophagi are put to the cheerful uses of pink geraniums; capitals and fonts and well-heads bubble over with all sorts of blooming things. In the sun-dial, little regarded by the Latin temperament, but dear as the lawn itself to the Britannic imagination, the American sculptor has a subject that cannot be accused of alien origin. Associated chiefly with English landscape art, it nevertheless may "mark only happy hours" in more formal surroundings. Harriet Frishmuth and Brenda Putnam are our most lately laureled dialists; both have been successful in adapting the well-modeled human figure to this form of garden sculpture.

Alas, that in every human effort shown out-of-doors, the climate has always the last word! Good old Horace, grumbling impressively about the hard

winters of Tibur, would find his sandaled toes shrewdly nipped in a Cornish garden on the Ides of December, with Mercury's winged heel quite capable of hitting well below the zero mark. In Italy, the tooth of time is not a bad sort of modeling-tool; it has carved a veil of illusion for triviality, and has given a new grace to things already beautiful. But in our northern latitudes, the tooth of time does not model; it ravages and corrodes, often with incredible swiftness, and due winter precautions must enshroud our garden sculpture. The question of material is ever with us. Bronze endures, but turns dark; marble is fair, but frail. In the dooryard of many an American artist, home-grown miracles have been wrought from cement. I recall charming tennis benches, with ornamented ends; a wall-fountain with reliefs of satyrs; some great vases enriched with the owner's coat-of-arms,

and cast in a three-piece mold; and numerous basins, posts, balustrades and steps. But trowel-sculpture has its limitations, and the question of durability has not yet been fully answered by the years. Perhaps, at some future day, science will co-operate with art, and produce for the garden sculptor a material as easily modeled as terra-cotta, as exquisite as marble, as impressive as granite, and as durable as bronze. Until then, we must manage as best we can with the materials the ancients had, though under climatic conditions more favorable than ours; and we may at least note with thankfulness that in garden art as in all things annihilation has its uses.



CHAPTER IX

OF SMALL BRONZES AND GREAT CRAFTS

I

AKIN to the faculty for creating garden sculpture is the gift for designing those "small bronzes" in which American connoisseurs are now taking a happy interest. The general public also is being made familiar with the best of these pieces; a result reached through the initiative of the National Sculpture Society and the enthusiasm of our American Federation of Arts in sending out traveling exhibitions of small bronzes to various cities. The small bronze may be either a potentially perfect reduction from some full-sized masterpiece, as in the well-known

Saint-Gaudens reliefs reduced from larger originals; or it may on the other hand be designed from the start in the ultimate size. Both types are excellent. American sculpture today counts scores of artists with a sure and delightful touch for the latter type. Some of our women sculptors have created little masterpieces in this intimate and friendly form.

Bessie Potter Vonnoh is an acknowledged leader here; one might say that she is the originator of an American genre, in which small size does not for a moment imply either a trifling imagination or a petty rendering. I well remember Mr. Howells's enthusiasm for Bessie Potter's figurines when they were first shown at a New York exhibition. Their authentic American note captivated him. "These," he declared, "are *real* creations in sculpture." The same may be said of Miss Eberle's vivid groups and

figures from street and fireside and doorstep; they have the charm and integrity of folk-lore tales told in a plastic medium. Animal form, as in the days of Barye and Frémiet, easily disports itself in this field. Miss Hyatt, Mr. Roth, Mr. Laessle and others press all the imaginable joys of La Fontaine's fables within the contours of their bronze goats and bears, tigers, turkeys, and elephants. Like the fables themselves, these bronzes are classics, as in the stricter sense, the delightful groups of Manship and Jennewein are classics.

Generally speaking, we do not like a look of toil and endeavor in our small bronzes; we want something spontaneous, whether graceful or humorous. Well and good. Yet here again is a real danger; anyone who has had the sobering privilege, year by year, of reviewing the rank and file of little plastic works presented for ex-

hibition knows very well that many of these pieces utterly lack the solid qualities of construction, workmanship and an understanding of nature's detail.

II

One of the brighter possibilities of the small bronze designed in its ultimate size is that it may well be cast by the *cire perdue* process. That name is not altogether a happy one, because in truth less of the sculptor's personal touch is "lost" by this method than by the sand process of bronze casting. By the lost wax method, it's the sculptor's own fault if there's anything wrong with the wax figure as it leaves his hands. A mold made of a composition suitable for enduring the subsequent impact of molten metal is then built up directly on the wax figure, which has of course its insoluble core. This stout mold or shell, closely enveloping every knob and crevice of its



CENTAUR AND DRYAD
BY PAUL MANSHIP

wax kernel, is subjected to heat; the wax is thus melted out; and, if all is well, an absolutely perfect space is left behind it, between core and shell, ready to receive the red-hot bronze. The *cire perdue* process theoretically avoids all unseemly seams, all ill-joined joints. At its best, it approaches perfection; and such work is as well done in our country as anywhere on earth.

The small bronze has then its two separate manifestations. It may present itself either as a reduction from some much larger work worthy of wide recognition and ownership, or as a spontaneous first-hand offering of a sculptural thought well-suited for expression within modest confines. In either shape, its cost is not prohibitive for many of our private citizens as well as for our museums. The cause of art and the delights of possession are advanced side by side.

III

Whether we look at a little book-end bear in bronze, or at a heroic equestrian statue in bronze and stone, or at a colossal monument in granite or marble, the importance of fine craftsmanship is evident. The artist is the last person in the world who can afford to underrate the craftsman.

Not long ago in reading an essay on literary criticism, I was confronted with this impressive query: What has the navel done for modern life? Of course modern literature in its desire to be impressive asks many curious questions of the reader, but this one about the navel seemed unduly wide of the mark. I was disturbed until I suddenly perceived that the printer had used an *a* for an *o;* the luckless author had meant to ask about the novel, not the navel. But the artist in words suffers less often at the hands of his

helping craftsman than does the artist in paint or clay. The sculptor in particular runs grave risks. Even the forces of nature conspire against him; the fair-faced marble hypocritically hides her blemishes until weeks of carving lay them bare. Even chemistry betrays him; the bronze that should be perfect everywhere has perhaps a spongy place or a "tin spot" or a treacherous seam just where it does the greatest possible damage to his statue.

One of the advantages of the ancient apprentice system was that the beginner in art could learn all the tricks, and not only the tricks but the very serious difficulties of the various trades that help to bring the artist's work to completion. Our American sculpture, which after all began timidly enough as a kind of craftsmanship, has at certain periods of its immaturity forgotten the importance and dignity of the crafts on which it depends for a fair

presentation. Bronze casting has indeed advanced greatly through the fact that modern sculpture has become largely an expression in clay, to be made permanent in bronze; sculptors have demanded good casting, and they have obtained it. In general, the sculptors of the world are no longer masters who release from stone, either hard or soft, the image circumscribed within. To reach their results, they do not as a rule start from the assumption of Michelangelo, as Symonds translates it:

> The best of artists hath no thought to show
> Which the rough stone in its superfluous shell
> Doth not include:

They look on their work as a building-up in clay, rather than as a cutting-down in stone. Well, why not? If the word *plastic* keeps its old meaning of something *shaped,* and *glyptic* its

meaning of something *carved,* surely the sculptor may without reproach choose his approach; always provided that this approach is the one best suited to the matter in hand.

But even here, changes are already visible. On both sides of the Atlantic a few sculptors are harking back to the fine old Gothic tradition which animated Michelangelo, that spirit who was at once a late fruit of the Gothic and a great flowering of the Renaissance. Perhaps we owe to Rodin this modern return from plastic to glyptic? At any rate, the movement is but lightly sketched, except as seen in some of the enormous monuments of Middle Europe, and in particular in the powerful works of the Serbian Mestrovic, as well as in those of recent insurgent followers of Rodin. An odd fact is, that some of these last, in seeking the titanic, have attained the Teutonic, especially when their theory of

deformation has betrayed them. And, of course, any new style, vital or not, will breed new errors.

Criticism has had of late a tendency to scold sculptors for not seeing things as Michelangelo did, or as the artist of "Le Beau Sourire de Reims" did. It is perhaps surprising that the eloquent mediæval craftsmanship suitable for Caen stone or limestone, and beautiful in its place, has not attracted a larger interest and a wider experiment among us. However, Miss Hoffman has just completed an important and unusual War Memorial in Caen stone. Mr. MacMonnies's great Washington monument at Princeton is of limestone, most thoughtfully carved, and not at all in the impetuous new manner; it may prove to be a forerunner of other ambitious enterprises in this material. But ours is an unkind climate. The sculptured forms of Italy and France have not had to endure the

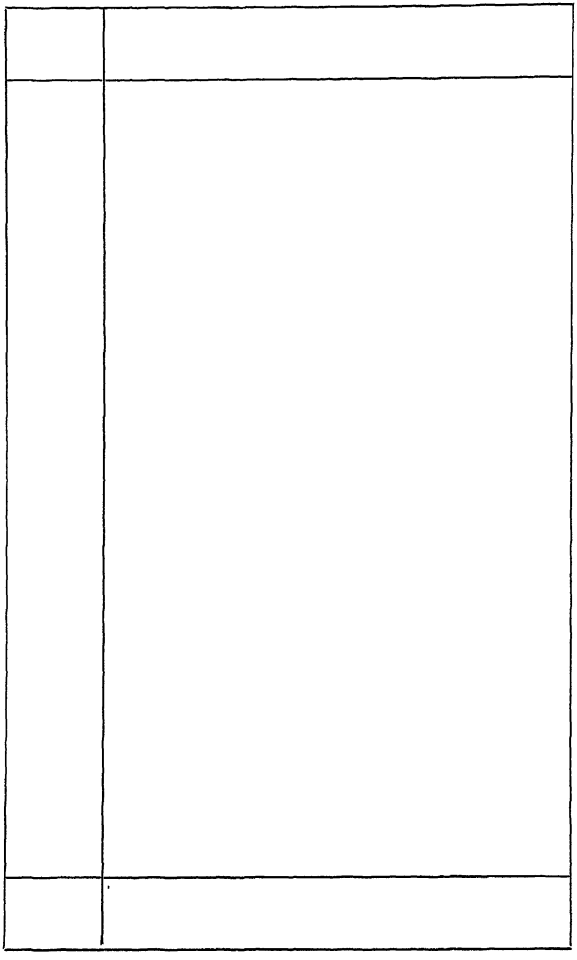
extreme changes of heat and cold well-known here. We have interesting varieties of marble and granite, and have made but a beginning in the exploration of their possibilities as adapted to our weather. A very beautiful tradition in marble-cutting has been built up in our country by the Piccirilli family, six brothers among whom are distinguished sculptors and distinguished craftsmen. Their output, which includes both their own original works and their faithful renderings in stone of the works of other sculptors, is known throughout the country, and has inspired good craftsmanship.

Thus in the major crafts of bronze casting and of marble-cutting, American sculpture is fairly fortunate today. In the one, we have come a long way from that first attempt in 1847; in the other, we have craftsmen who for large work to be seen at a distance can sufficiently well translate into stone the

sculptor's finished models. We have also for our salvation a few sculptors, who, like Chester Beach, are peculiarly gifted in wresting from the marble, and with their own hands, their own visions. But Mr. Beach is different again from most of his contemporaries, in that he is successful in his command over *all* the final materials in which a sculptor's work may be presented, whether terra-cotta, stone, or bronze. With a modern and highly interesting vision of beauty, and with an absolute understanding of the principles of sculpture, this artist respects both the *art* and the *craft* of sculpture. Sometimes it would seem that the finer the artist, the finer his appreciation of craftsmanship.

Of course if one were to judge by the pictures in the Sunday supplements, all sculptors carve their marbles themselves; they seem to do little else. That is not true, alas. Certainly a

busy sculptor may well save himself for other matters besides roughing-out a block of marble. But a serious sculptor will generally wish to give the finishing strokes, few or many, a matter of weeks or of months, to any marble work that leaves his hands. In modern stone-cutting, the pneumatic tool is indeed a miracle-worker; and for that very reason, it bears constant watching from the sculptor whose work it translates. Mr. John Kirchmayer, an artist in the field of wood-carving, has described in a recent article the mischief wrought for this art by too great a dependence on the machine, a dependence that atrophies the native genius of the craftsman. His counsel is the same that all arts and crafts must follow: Use the machine but do not abuse it. When the cheapening of production means the debasing of the product, it is time for art and the machine to part company.



CHAPTER X

THE NATIONAL SCULPTURE SOCIETY

OTHER gifts besides those commonly acknowledged as the artist's peculiar possession are needful if the advancement of art and the status of the artist are to be fitly assured. These other gifts belonged to the painter Morse when in defending the interests of art-study he played his important part in founding our National Academy of Design in 1825. They belonged to the artists who, in espousing the cause of the young Saint-Gaudens half a century later, broke away from the Academy to form the Society of American Artists. They belonged also to those later spirits who, perceiving the weakness of that disunion, manag-

ed somehow to gather the Society back into the bosom of the Academy, to the chastening of both factions. And they belong in good measure to Mr. F. W. Ruckstull, an American sculptor of widely recognized ability, who in 1893, with the help of Mr. Charles de Kay and others, was foremost in assembling the body since known as the National Sculpture Society. Mr. Ruckstull and the other charter members had no personal tocsin of revolt to sound; they simply saw, as intelligent artists and citizens, that their art and their country needed such an organization, "to spread the knowledge of good sculpture."

To begin with, sculpture is not easy to exhibit. Far more than any living painter has ever acknowledged, it suffers acutely from unfriendly lighting. The old proverb that good sculpture looks well anywhere ought to be amended to add, it looks its best only

in its chosen light and space. Sculpture's appetite for space, at times modest, is at times illimitable. The Academy, always hard-pressed for space in its annual exhibitions, cannot afford to give up large well-lit areas for sculptures of heroic size. The Architectural League is hospitable toward sculpture, but, the aims of this body being many and diverse, it certainly cannot favor the sculptors above all other comers. Once in a while, if not oftener, our sculpture should be shown under the happiest conditions. Again, sculpture, even more than painting, has active contacts with the worlds of government, whether municipal, state or federal; it should be able to present itself with the authority naturally vested in an honored group of experts. And sculptors, quite as much as painters and architects, must stand together lest personal interest wrong the general good, and lest individuals fall into

SCULPTURE SOCIETY

misunderstandings either among themselves, or with the public, to whose intelligent opinion they, like other citizens, must commonly submit.

The Society, founded in 1893, and incorporated in 1896, has had from the first an extraordinarily vivifying influence in matters of sculpture. It has labored for the public good, in harmony with various private committees, with Municipal Art Commissions, and with the Federal Commission of Fine Arts. Its first president, John Quincy Adams Ward, believed enthusiastically in its work and destiny. His first annual report emphasizes the fact that its "reputation will be established by its deeds, not by empty promises." In the Society's second year, Ward was called upon, in association with Warner and Saint-Gaudens, to give counsel as to the sculptural decorations for the Library of Congress, the architecture of this building being at

that time in the hands of Edward P. Casey. Mr. Casey showed a fine zeal in getting the best possible sculpture for the Library; besides the usual structural ornament, his scheme called for fountains, three pairs of bronze doors, and for a circle of twelve imposing bronze statues by almost as many sculptors. The results were in general very happy, and at once established a high standard. And this is important, because the fine public building enhanced by sculpture is of service in the progress of art, as we see from the Brooklyn Museum, the New York Public Library, the Cleveland Court House.

Among the "deeds" foreshadowed by Mr. Ward were certain memorable exhibitions of sculpture, enterprises of genuine value to the community. These exhibitions were wisely and enthusiastically arranged in collaboration with landscape architects and florists;

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beautiful works fitly shown proved a surprise and a joy to both public and connoisseurs. The public was reminded that sculpture is a living art, with roots and branches; that it is not dedicated entirely to pediments, portrait statues, and other monumental grandeurs; and that sculptured forms may charm the eye of the home-maker and the garden-lover, in intimate possession.

In 1899 Charles R. Lamb, a charter member, born with a vision of the City Beautiful and working always toward the realization of that great dream, conceived the thought of the Dewey Arch as a dignified free-will offering from our sculptors,—an offering that would take a central and beautiful part in New York's public tribute to the hero of Manila. That idea somehow captured the fancy of Mr. Lamb's fellow-artists. Immediately and unreservedly, they gave themselves to the

sculptural decorations of this arch and its approaches; Mr. Ward, full of years and honors, set the pace by his vigorous design for the crowning group of Naval Victory. It was rightly said that the names of those sculptors who dedicated themselves to this Arch constituted a roll of honor. The result of their labors was impressive beyond expectation. The Dewey Arch, though a temporary structure, lives in our remembrance; it is vivid in our annals as an example of whole-hearted artistic co-operation; it gave a precedent for our later historic transformation of Fifth Avenue into the Avenue of the Allies, an enterprise to which our sculptors once more devoted their gifts. These rousing masculine gestures of civic pride have a value. At the very least, they keep the world from falling into the belief that Fifth Avenue is no more than a bright shop where beautifully painted flower-face girls

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choose endless bubbles of adornment, only to speed away self-regarding yet unsatisfied on their tiptoe silvery shoes.

It is true that of late there has been grumbling as to the choice of any arch as a monumental form fitted to express the tribute of our citizens to patriotism. This disapproval is sometimes warranted, sometimes merely superficial. The arch, as we shall doubtless see within the next generation, has its own place in our time; collaboration between sculptor and architect has never been better understood than at present. To reject an arch because it obstructs traffic, because it is out of scale, because it does not fit its surroundings, because it is needlessly magnificent, because it does not express the emotion it pretends to express,—all this is very wise, and important when true. But is it not stupid to reject the arch just because the Romans liked it? However, discussion as to

the value of the arch in our coming War memorials is beside the mark in looking back on the Dewey Arch as a fine example of artistic co-operation.

A valuable activity has been the sending out of small sculptures on tour throughout the country. Commenting on the universal public need of something with increased beauty to replace the story-telling Rogers groups of other days, a president of the Society wrote in 1913: "The time was ripe when some four years ago the National Sculpture Society carefully selected and sent out as a traveling exhibition nearly two hundred small bronzes which made a circuit of the museums in some eight or ten of the important cities. The responsive interest was as immediate as it was unexpected, and thousands of people gave expression to their pleasure in seeing what had hardly been known to exist. In Chicago alone, over thirty thou-

sand persons visited this first exhibition. . . . This year, under similar auspices, and the management of the Pittsburgh Art Society, another collection of entirely different bronzes is passing from one museum to another, and meeting the same warm reception from the public."

Established in New York, the Society has proved by work of this kind that it is truly National in its aims. Earnest inquiries and knotty problems are sent to it from all quarters of the United States. At one time it will be asked to "prepare the program for the competition for the $100,000 American Baseball Monument." Again, it will be found considering the question, "What will it cost to produce 30,000 medals within three weeks?" Only a great moral earnestness joined to a knowledge of art and some acumen in judging human nature can properly answer some of the queries submitted.

The Society's professional membership includes nearly all persons in the United States who practise the art of sculpture with dignity and merit; it is safe to say that any renowned sculptor remaining aloof from the organization is an individualist, doubtless with a congenital distaste for organized effort. The Society's lay membership is an unusually large and distinguished group, made up in the main of disinterested lovers of art. In addition to the proverbial reward of virtue, the lay members receive from time to time some tangible souvenir, such as a small bronze designed by a sculptor member, or a monograph. These tokens occur often enough to attest good will, but not so often as to lose the charm of the unexpected.

The list of professional members reveals a surprisingly large number of names of women. It will be remembered that Mr. Ward, that figure of

virility personified, cordially invited women sculptors to become members of the Society, and to join in the deliberations of the council-table. Chesterton, in his story of Victorian literature, has emphasized the importance of women writers in the development of the English novel. In our country, the importance of women engaged in sculpture as a gainful occupation has steadily increased during the past half-century. "Enter the race," said Mr. Ward, "asking no odds!" Commissions for statues were once given to women, it must be confessed, out of what Dr. Johnson might call "Pure ignorance, Madam." How otherwise can we explain the spectacle of our chivalrous Congressmen entrusting to a girl of fifteen the making of a statue of Lincoln? It is indeed said that "all the great sculptors of the period submitted models, but that the committee, after careful study, decided that

the model of the little Ream girl surpassed all others." The child surely had genius; she had the further advantage of quiet half-hours of study of Lincoln from life.

But to-day,—well, it isn't supposed to be done! Thanks to the National Sculpture Society, such competitions are at present generally conducted with even-handed justice. Nowadays, women who receive really important sculptural commissions are expected to deserve them out of the fullness of experience. In 1911, I was unwise enough to write, apropos of the monumental equestrian statue, that this field was for man's working, and that it would not in the near future offer any very large *place aux dames*. But it chanced that the fifth centenary of Jeanne d'Arc fell due soon after, and Miss Hyatt, paying no attention to my grotesque observation, began work on her equestrian statue of the Maid.

Rarely has any such statue been studied with as fine a vision of the relative claims of art and archæology. In 1915, Miss Hyatt's work was unveiled on Riverside Drive. It is one of the best-loved monuments in the city of New York; and from the day of its unveiling, I have forsworn prophecy. Otherwise, I might be tempted to add that at present, given the tradition of apprenticeship still keeping its last stronghold in some of the studios, and given the ease with which assistance may be obtained for the ruder manual labor, there is no reason why women may not be trained to solve with success the usual sculptural problems. "Because they are conscientious, and because they have imagination," were the reasons given by a sculptor who employed women assistants.

The National Sculpture Society's ideals, to be valuable and enduring, must concern themselves with the ethi-

cal as well as the artistic side of various questions brought before the body. On the ethical side, it has, not without inherent difficulties, established its Code governing Competitions, the Code itself being governed by the Society's avowed principle of fostering art with integrity. Year by year, the good work of this Code is shown by the larger clarity of purpose and of statement, and the larger conscientiousness in endeavor now expected alike from committees, competitors, and juries of award.

Some of the thoughtful idealists of the Society have long wished that it could undertake as part of its work an enterprise that might prove of untold value in the arts. "If instead of wrangling so long and so devotedly over our Code," said one of these idealists, "we could have given the time to establishing a workshop for scientific experiments with our various ma-

terials, what immense practical good might have been accomplished! But it would take money, more money than our Society has ever had at its disposal."

The field for such experiment is boundless. Science properly applied could help the sculptor at every step.

Think what it would mean to the sculptor if he had a *plastic* material which by the magic of chemistry could be at once converted into an *imperishable* material, exactly as it leaves his hands; or if the metallurgist would find him an alloy of metals which would take on, or even hold, a beautiful *patine* when exposed to our atmosphere; or if the chemist could explain some of the strange antics and prevent the misbehavior of that go-between, common plaster, which plays such a vital part in a sculptor's work from the clay model to the final marble or bronze. Plaster is indispensable, in

spite of its shortcomings; could not this lifeless, chalky stuff be transformed into a substance both durable and interesting? And marble, that sovereign among materials, is there no way by which its fine white crystals could be made to take on other tones than those nature has given? The questions are legion. With the amazing advance of practical chemistry within the last few years, many of them might be definitely settled by scientific experiment. It is to be hoped that in the near future the National Sculpture Society will acquire its needed research workshop, and put out publications of the results obtained, so that science may assist art as generously as in an allegory of mural decoration.

We have spoken of idealists. No member of the Society has proved himself a more practical idealist than Mr. Lorado Taft, long an enthusiastic teacher of the modeling classes at the

Chicago Art Institute, and to-day a force for art not only in the Middle West, but throughout the country. Mr. Taft is the sculptor of the Black Hawk monument, the grandiose fountain of Time, and other works well-known indeed, but not because he himself in his thousands of lectures and in his two important books on sculpture has ever taken the opportunity to advertise his own talent. The fact is ironic, even grotesque; by voice and pen Mr. Taft has for years disclosed the merits of all sculpture save his own. Lesser artists than himself have been genially interpreted in his vivid and conscientious expositions. His public service for sculpture, a service now widely welcomed, was begun in the Middle West, a part of our country which because of its early settlement by Americans, Germans, and Scandinavians of enlightened stock, was early interested in artistic endeavor, and which today

has some of our strongest art schools and museums. Nowhere else could his work have been begun so usefully. As sculptor, traveler, lecturer, writer, Mr. Taft gives himself with unfailing zest to that first avowed object of the Society, "to spread the knowledge of good sculpture."

During the World War, and throughout the subsequent period of striving to wrest world betterment out of world bewilderment, the Society has remained active in its chosen work. The Spring of 1918 saw the opening by the Metropolitan Museum of a permanent exhibition of contemporary American sculpture; and to quote from a Bulletin of that time, Mr. French, the honorary president of the Society, "to whose gallant initiative and untiring endeavor the success of the undertaking is largely due, is as truly an American patriot as if he were a very young man with a very new rifle, now

gazing eagerly toward the coast of France." Robert Aitken and Sherry Fry, sculptors already distinguished in their profession before serving abroad with our Army, have doubtless through their military experience gained something of value to them as artists and as citizens. By the death of Harry Thrasher, killed near Rheims, the Society has lost one of its promising members; one who, having richly profited by his advanced studies at the American Academy in Rome, seemed at the outbreak of the War to stand on the threshold of high achievement in art. Those who knew him well have said that in his work as a sculptor, varied though this was, his genius was seen at its best in spacious and heroic conceptions, and that had he been spared, the heroic would have been as fully expressed in his art as it has been expressed in his life and its final sacrifice. The recent untimely death of

Solon Borglum, an artist in whom a winning personality was joined to integrity of purpose and originality of outlook, was doubtless hastened by hardships met during his devoted service in France. Such men well illustrate the hope of the National Sculpture Society as to the quality of its membership; as sculptors and as citizens, they gave themselves to their art and to their country.

In the stimulating opportunity for exhibition offered to American sculptors through the courtesy of the group of learned Societies housed in stately fashion in upper Broadway, the National Sculpture Society desires once more to show, in a creditable manner and to a discerning public, the beauty and serviceableness of the art its members practise. Broadway at 156th Street is unlike any other Broadway in the world. The air is finer and clearer there than elsewhere, yet not

too fine and good for human nature's daily breathing. Very hospitable are the terraces and galleries of the Hispanic Society, the Numismatic Society, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Geographical Society, the Heye Foundation. The National Sculpture Society counts on a dignified setting such as it has never before enjoyed, together with a sympathetic collaboration such as it has always appreciated, to achieve a worthy revelation of sculptured form.

CHAPTER XI

INFLUENCES, GOING AND COMING

"Quid quisque vitet, nunquam homini satis cautum est in horas."

I

SOMETIMES we talk as if the present state of things were a sort of terminus; as if by many roads we had at last reached Rome. Would it not be wiser to look upon the Olympian Washington and the Adams Memorial and the lately-discussed Civic Virtue as so many figures marking stations of a journey by no means finished? We have had competent leaders in the immediate past of our sculpture; is there anything in our American way of life and our American view of art that

will prevent our having competent leaders in the future? We are too close to that question to answer it, beyond saying that we are full of hope. And art is one of those matters concerning which despair is criminal. Certainly the chaos resulting from the World War is not as yet sufficiently transformed for the wisest to know from what Ark, high and dry on what Ararat, will issue the new hopes of all mankind. We can only cry out with Galsworthy, not yet are there enough lovers of beauty among us.

Our introductory chapter noted with some emphasis the fact that through Jefferson's hands the realism of France and the idealism of Italy came to the aid of our new-born plastic art. Houdon happened to be a greater sculptor than Canova; it was our good fortune that we had Houdon at all. And Jefferson drew the curtain for a steadily unfolding act in the drama. Since his

day, France and Italy have always been our chief allies in our sculpture. Because of this, and because of the Roman origin of most of the British culture our early settlers brought with them, bred in the bone, it follows that the main current of American sculpture, in thought, in feeling, and even in workmanship, has been fed from the boundless streams of Mediterranean civilization. Now and again, a Celtic influence, a German influence, a Scandinavian influence has made itself felt, for better or for worse.

Each new influence as it comes we shall prize for what it is, after the gloss or shock of novelty is worn off. Each may have an importance we can but guess at. Saint-Gaudens was deeply conscious that he had received his legacy of artistic sensitiveness quite as much from his Irish mother as from his French father, born in Southern France not far from those sculptured

mountains on which many a French poet and artist opened infant eyes. Perhaps Celtic glamor was all that made his vision of man somewhat different from that of many of his comrades at the *petite école,*—just different enough to give his later work a chance at immortality, while the images they shaped had to go back dumb to the clay-pit again. It is a great gift, the Celtic eye, though making small boast of seeing things steadily and seeing them whole; ah, nothing so prosaic as that! Celtic melancholy and Celtic mirth raise up a kind of shimmering rainbow-dust through which an image is seen in glorious parts; and Celtic exasperation loves stir more than steadiness. But the plodders need the seers; and ever since the time of Crawford and his Past and Present of the Republic, our sculpture has been graced and enlivened by many a Mac and O; never more so than to-day. The Wren

epitaph fits them even during their lifetime:—*Circumspice.*

So in our country as in Britain, the Scottish and the Irish and the Welsh strains in the blood key up the English-speaking peoples in their arts of vision and expression. Yet when all such things are said, (and much more might be said, with unmannerly talk of "creeping Saxons" and the like) the fact remains that the future art of the United States is even less easy to foreknow than that of the British Isles; and this because of what we call our "melting-pot" population, with all its benefits and drawbacks, its clamorous and conflicting ideals in art and in morality. The great American alembic is still seething. Newer forces than any that have come from Britain and France and Italy are now stirring here. What of these? Mr. Sloane, in his address on the sculptor Ward, reminded us of the slow evolu-

tion of sculpture, of the long journey between the Memnon and the Hermes, of the swifter travel between Greek art and our own, and of our recent return, not only to the classic, but to the oriental. That inquiring look toward the Orient, a corner of the earth always revered in occidental art, was never so general as at present. Some time ago, the studies of our sculptors at the American Academy at Rome led them to the eastern borders of that richly intricate rim of the Mediterranean basin; a rim from which we are still plucking jewels of hitherto unimagined splendor, such as those of Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb. But before pressing still farther eastward, let us glance a moment at the familiar influences of recent formative years.

II

We differentiate too rudely if we say offhand that American sculpture

has learned its *art* from France, its *craft* from Italy. The truth cannot be told so simply as that. For instance, the Piccirillis, American artists and craftsmen of Italian ancestry, are but a few out of many talented American sculptors of Italian birth. Again, we went to France for lessons in casting bronze, as well as in making our weekly "bonhomme" at the *école*. Yet for the whole Western world of sculpture during the past forty years, the strongest general influence has been that of the French school, and the strongest single influence that of a Frenchman aloof from the school, Auguste Rodin. No thinking sensitive person who uses clay to shape his visions and earn his living has failed to feel Rodin's influence; it is already so deeply imbedded in consciousness that many of those who most imitate this master are least aware of so doing. It would be a mistake to suppose, because the shout-

ing is over, that this powerful influence has wholly waned.

We have spoken of the uses of collaboration. But there are souls that would perish rather than collaborate. Some of these belong in the ranks of genius, others are distinctly due elsewhere. Of the former class was Rodin, never willing or able to subject himself to any architectural tradition. Even while writing of Rodin's consistent refusal of collaboration, I hear the ironic voice of M. Anatole France, a veteran in one art speaking of a veteran in another: *"Et surtout, avouons-le, il collabore trop avec la catastrophe."* And he adds, with that sparkle of malice veterans allow themselves but not others to use when speaking of veterans, *"Il abuse du droit de casser ce qui, dans une œuvre, est mal venu."* According to M. France, Rodin collaborates, and even too much; not with architecture, as a

more conventional soul might, but with architecture's logical opposite, catastrophe. It is more fruitful to dwell on the gifts of genius than on its limitations; yet the limitations also must be noted, whenever blind worship confuses defects with qualities. It was a limitation (and so the *Société des Gens de Lettres* found it) that Rodin could not bring himself to any architectural conception of his Balzac:—Balzac, more architecturally minded than even the English novelist Hardy; Balzac, who will not let you once look at Père Goriot until you have a clear understanding of the plan and elevation of the sordid *pension* where the poor man lives; Balzac, who jealously hides Eugénie Grandet from you until you have mastered every arch and cornice of the gloomy mansion that shelters her; Balzac, who insists that you must know period and style and galleries and window-glass of *la mai-*

son Claes before you can peer at Madame Claes. Balzac built his novels that way because to his mind man's architecture is part of his life, his fate, his rôle in the Comédie Humaine. So what Rodin did lacked basic fitness. In that portrait statue, the Rodin of it was more precious to him than the Balzac of it; he could make no compromise.

Now an advancing civilization will make its honorable compromises; and it seems to me that Saint-Gaudens's way of letting the significant winds and waves play about the architectural pedestal or deck that Farragut bestrides is more civilized than Rodin's far simpler way of letting the magnificent head of his Balzac emerge from monstrous shapelessness to splendor. The Balzac looks splendidly begun, the Farragut splendidly brought to completion. There is indeed a charm in things greatly begun. Such things

suggest the untamed glory of the human spirit, and give skyey space for the beholder's imagination to dip its wings in. The poorest of us in looking at them can at least conjecture, if not create. And a very present refuge for the sculptor is that lump of marble which says nothing but suggests much in Rodin's portraits of women, and in many of his ideal groups with certain surfaces of soft flesh exquisitely carved in their emergence from the hard stone. Those melodious modulations of light and shade in flesh are Rodin's secret; here his genius is forever happy. That woman's marble back, for instance; one thinks that if one should touch it, the skin would yield and pale and redden again. Rodin himself, in his talk of his own work and of the classic masterpieces he loved, constantly uses the word "esprit" rather than "chair," and from his point of view there is no inconsist-

ency in that. Gratefully we acknowledge that this master has showed the wonders of both flesh and spirit. It was well for American sculpture to applaud both triumphs. What next?

Next, there were certain mannerisms better left unlearned by our students; for example, that use of large extremities, a choice announcing a healthy abhorrence of prettiness. We have seen in our land many a Bertha Broadfoot and many a Helen of the Large Hand created by those who had not Rodin's excuse for this avoidance of conventional proportion; they were not revealing the scarce-finished new beings of Paradise, or the muscular striding bulk of a John the Baptist in the wilderness. There is yet another mannerism filched by admiring disciples; perhaps it is something less superficial than a mannerism. We need not take M. France too seriously when he says of M. Rodin, *"Il me semble ignorer*

la science des ensembles." It is a saying fitter to live in the flow of talk than to be embalmed in print; yet it draws blood, too, with its prickly edge of truth. Rodin's ensembles are his own, not those of sane tradition; his imitators' ensembles are often pitifully less good than those of either Rodin or the school. That is serious! At the present moment, many American War monuments are in the making; too many, perhaps, are casting away collaboration and tradition. Their creators seem unaware that they are under an influence; they think they are showing originality, preaching the gospel of simplicity, and in a really messianic way, calling architecture to repentance.

But, nowhere is the architectural conception of work more necessary than in a new country. Without that conception, these United States would be besprinkled with productions richer in the one virtue of individuality than

in the many virtues of order, unity, harmony, an underlying sense of natural evolution and continuity. Our civilization is not yet jaded, and does not yet need prickings toward variety. For American sculpture, the lesson of Rodin's genius, as distinct from the lesson of the school, is that of the titanic conception and the exquisite *morceau,* but not that of harmonious collaboration. Meanwhile, it is cheering to see that the singular doctrine of deformation distilled in France by vigorous modern followers of Rodin is at present neglected here; when we turn modernist, as sometimes happens, we choose the path of abstractions, seeking perhaps Epstein's "form that is not the form of anything," rather than form amplifying itself into ugliness, in defiance of classic balance and measure. In fact, a recent piece of the new poetry, written about a recent piece of the new sculpture tells us that

"the immaculate
conception
of the inaudible bird
occurs
in gorgeous reticence."

Gorgeous reticence is perhaps preferable to gorgeous loquacity.

III

For a long time, and without conspicuous success, Mr. Howells tried to show his friends the beauty of Russian realism. Apparently much of the American appreciation that did not go out to Turgenev was being saved for Chekhov, and for those later realists whose writings chime with the discords and disillusions of the "expressionism" now making itself felt in various arts. Both here and in England, the Russian influence is visible in literature. But sculpture is slower than literature to accept the exotic; sculpture's magisterial weight and bulk, and its sup-

posed permanence, help to make it more self-contained and less mercurial in its reactions. And indeed all the Russian influence our sculpture has hitherto met has been of the Gallic variety; Troubetskoy's brilliant *plein-airiste* modeling is as French as Marie Bashkirtseff's painting. Meanwhile, Russian peasant drama is having its brightly colored successes here, in our richest of American cities, especially among those of our intelligentsia who can afford the price of admission, or who as critics make their living by appraising novelties in art. Since American criticism is often created by youth and for youth, its various impregnable positions shift with a rapidity that has a certain advantage for a listening public; no one who is guided by a youthful Mentor needs to remain long in any one error. But Heaven forbid that youth, and most of all opinion-shaping youth, should aban-

don a generosity of outlook toward foreign products of the mind!

To speak seriously, it will be interesting to know just how the increasing Slavic element in our population will influence our country's arts in general, and our self-contained art of sculpture in particular. When a teacher of art remarks, in some dubiety, "So many of our students have names that end in 'sky'," the only gallant retort is, "It is our business to be sure that they make no worse end than that." Not the least of art's problems here in America is that universal American problem of the unassimilated alien. Optimists and pessimists can unite in one opinion; that our latest immigrants, no less than those of the Mayflower, have certain native qualities that need alteration for the benefit of the human race. The Puritan has altered for the better. Later comers must do likewise. Some of

these have a far harder task than the Puritans, with less ability to perform it; but they have infinitely more help.

Mr. John Corbin, in one of his penetrating studies of dramatic art, has pointed out "two stages of American provincialism." One stage rejects all foreign culture; the other embraces anything foreign, provided that it is abundantly subversive of domestic ideals and labors and attainments. Both stages are hostile to truth and to progress, and to the only freedom there is, freedom of the spirit. The first type wilfully stunts growth; the second invites destruction of growth already accomplished by costly effort. Surely American sculpture, which has borrowed eagerly abroad and developed soundly at home, should not fall into either of these degenerate modes of thinking.

"Quid quisque vitet," says Horace, with his canny Roman philosophy,—

"What hourly to avoid is known by none." What hourly to accept is our modern question. Since a man's foes may be of his own household, what if our own home-grown materialism were after all the worst enemy of our art? It will do little good to fly feverish alien contacts if at the same time things of the spirit are allowed to languish at our own ancestral firesides. Sometimes the firesides themselves seem less frequent, as ancestors diminish in the world's esteem. True, our tawdry and vehement self-advertising has its magnificent dreams, and our childlike faith in the dollar its occasional glorious hour of justification; we cannot help seeing that some of our transatlantic co-workers in art and letters come among us remembering those things. And it is a healing principle of civilization that we shall borrow our light from one land, and divide our loaf with another; even

though loaves are wasted thereby. Every lover of our country will wish its culture to remain at once hospitable and self-respecting; both characteristics may dwell harmoniously together.

In spite of superficial indications such as those offered by the names in a city telephone directory, the core and nucleus of general culture in the United States remains English-speaking; more, it remains true to ideals of human conduct and human responsibility that have been fruitfully developed and cherished by the English-speaking peoples. Whatever lightly-accepted beliefs there may be in regard to this matter, I am persuaded that the broad basis of American culture is and will be our Puritanism. Not the narrow, mote-seeking Puritanism of past story, but an enlightened, liberating Puritanism, with perceptions and pardons for others, and with questionings as to its own supposed superiorities; a Puri-

tanism that has gained in grace and goodness through native development and happy alien contacts. How often we have mumbled an ancient shibboleth to the effect that art and morality have nothing in common! On the contrary, they have the one supreme aspiration of human beings in common; the benefit of the race. It is the little artist who proclaims himself different from other men, and so not subject to their laws; the great artist strives to bring his personality and his work into harmony with the best that he knows of human effort. Magnanimous men and women unconsciously reveal their longing that their work may live after them for the happiness of mankind. Ward on his death-bed, finally assured that all is well with the great equestrian that had engaged his last thoughts, whispers to his wife, "Now I can go in peace." Saint-Gaudens in the later pages of his Memoirs

writes of the knowledge of the beautiful: "I know it is a question whether such a knowledge increases the general happiness and morality of a community. I firmly believe it does, as I believe that any effort to do a thing as well as it can be done, regardless of mercenary motives, tends to the elevation of the human mind."



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BY AUGUSTUS SAINT-GAUDENS


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